

# Community Handbook



HERONFIELD  
ACADEMY

2024-2025

# Important Dates

**2024 - 2025**

*(subject to change)*

September	October	November
3 New Student Orientation 4 First Day of Classes 12 Convocation 27 Grandparents & Special Friends Day	3 Rosh Hashanah - <i>No School</i> 10 School Picture Day 11 Yom Kippur - No School 14 Indigenous People’s Day - <i>No School</i>	11 Veterans Day - <i>No School</i> 22 Picture Retake Day 25 Conference Day - <i>No Classes</i> 26 PD Day - <i>No Classes</i> 27-29 Thanksgiving Break - <i>No School</i>
December	January	February
20 Festival of Light Winter Concert 21 -1/5 Winter Break - <i>No School</i>	6 Classes Resume 20 MLK Jr. Day, <i>No School</i>	14 PD Day - <i>No Classes</i> 17 President’s Day - <i>No School</i>
March	April	May
8-23 Spring Break - <i>No School</i> 24 Classes Resume	18 Good Friday - <i>No School</i>	26 Memorial Day - <i>No School</i>
June	+	
11 Last Day of School and Graduation		

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## Heronfield Academy Soars into its 18th Year!


Heronfield Academy will come alive once more in September for its 18th year! From its founding in 2007, the school continues to grow as we strengthen our program, expand and enrich our facilities, and welcome many new families to our community. I am especially excited that we are elevating our commitment to student mental health this year in adding a part-time school counselor, and I hope that we will continue to partner with our families in raising young people to their highest possibilities. Two new members of our faculty and staff will add to the good work we do, and the board of trustees will continue to help the school think strategically and set the school on a path for long-term success.

The *Heronfield Academy Community Handbook 2024-2025* offers a wide array of information about the school, its daily operations and its ongoing culture, and the many policies and principles that guide our experiences together. While it is intended to offer as much information as possible, all community members should hold in mind that specific instances may necessitate a modification of the rules and principles presented here, and that the final determination in all matters rests with the Head of School.

As we head into the upcoming school year, we are building on a successful accreditation process conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE). This process, which occurs every ten years, encourages the faculty and staff and the board of trustees to think deeply about all aspects of the school program and how the school can better work toward meeting its mission. The year-long experience brought forth a number of important conversations, and the visiting team's evaluation offers many points of pride and also suggests important directions for the future. We are already building on AISNE's recommendations and we will continue to do so in the months and years as we bring forth the best possible school and community.

In reviewing this handbook, I encourage you to notice the many times that the words 'community', 'families' and 'partnership' appear. Indeed, it is through the strong and ever-growing relationships between home and school that we are able to develop and build such a strong Heronfield Academy, one that extends well beyond the initial image of children in a classroom and truly creates a wide group of people committed to the school and its students.

Here's to a great year ahead!



John Turner  
Head of School

## **Section I: An Overview of Heronfield Academy**

### **A Brief History**

In October 2002, the Rev. Canon Tim Rich, then Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, felt strongly about the value of progressive, spiritual education, and invited others to join him for an exploratory discussion about founding a school that would provide an important option on the New Hampshire seacoast. Soon enough, the group formed a Board of Trustees with the goal of establishing an independent middle school.

In 2006, Scott Votey was hired as the founding Head of School, and Liberty Farm on Exeter Road in Hampton Falls emerged as the potential site for the school. Successful fundraising and a growing partnership with the town of Hampton Falls allowed the Board to announce that the new school would open its doors in September of 2007.

On Wednesday, August 29, the Reverend Canon Tim Rich cut the ribbon to our schoolhouse and students, faculty, staff, and trustees gathered for an historic "thumbs up" picture. Six days later, the school's inaugural Convocation was held in the yard behind the farmhouse under beautiful skies. Bishop Gene Robinson offered the invocation, followed by a benediction and a blessing by Rabbi Larry Karol. Further words were shared, songs were sung, and Heronfield Academy was indeed underway. The first year brought wonderful memories and initiated many traditions, including December's Festival of Light and weekly Chapel (now Sanctuary) talks presented by religious leaders, faculty members, and students. Most importantly, the school's dedicated teachers established an academic program that continues to challenge, engage and inspire Heronfield's students.

Heronfield welcomed its second Head of School, Martha Shepardson-Killam, in its third year. Under Martha's leadership the school increased its enrollment, enhanced its facilities, and built a strong fundraising program. In March of 2015, Heronfield purchased its permanent home on twelve acres of Liberty Farm. Martha and her husband, music director David Killam, retired in June of 2018.

Betsy Kelly served as the Head of School from July of 2018 until June 2020. She was instrumental in the vision and creation of the Technology, Engineering and Art (TEA) program and the iStudio that houses it.

In January of 2020, Heronfield Academy opened the doors of its new 20,000 square-foot Field House, providing a space for physical education classes, athletic practice and competition, and other community programs. The impressive space was made possible through the hard work and generosity of many, including the Board of Trustees, parents, grandparents, alumni parents and grandparents, the Head of School, the former Head of School and the Town of Hampton Falls.

John Turner joined the Heronfield community in the summer of 2020 as the school's interim Head of School, and he was named the school's fourth Head of School in December of the same year. The 2020-2021 school year and the global coronavirus pandemic presented many challenges, and yet the entire community - the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff, parents and students - worked well together to ensure that the school navigated the challenges as safely and smoothly as possible. In the two years that followed, the school has enhanced learning spaces across the campus and has engaged in a strategic planning process to ensure that the school moves thoughtfully forward into its future. During the 2023-2024 academic year, Heronfield Academy added a school musical and after-school arts programs, and took part in its third accreditation process in partnership with the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE).

## **Mission, Vision and Core Values**

*Mission:* Heronfield Academy provides an exceptional middle school experience that empowers students to reach their highest level of academic and personal achievement. We are committed to ensuring that every individual in our community is seen, heard, known, and valued.

*Vision:* Heronfield Academy will transform the way students and their families experience middle school education.

*Core Values:*    Respect            Kindness            Diligence            Celebration            Caring

## **Philosophy**

Heronfield Academy is purposefully designed to serve middle school students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, and we are deeply invested in each student's academic and personal development during this important stage of their lives. Our size provides for a vibrant community and also assures that our students and teachers make meaningful connections. Students are at the center of all we do at Heronfield. We delight in seeing them take on challenges and grow as they engage in each experience and activity. We think deeply about the roles of critical thinking and creative expression, of collaboration and curiosity.

There is no greater period in the lives of young people than the middle school years. At Heronfield, we think deeply about the arc of the middle school years, a period of physical, social, and emotional development only matched by the first three years of a child's life. By dedicating our energies, passions, and resources to students in grades 6, 7, and 8, we are able to take advantage of the ways that young people's minds are opening and how they are learning to engage with others and with the world around them.

Each experience at Heronfield – from new student orientation before the year begins to eighth grade graduation in June – is considered with the student in mind, and we are inspired by the difference that Heronfield makes in the lives of students and their families.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Heronfield Academy**

*Statement written in the Fall of 2020 by a joint board and faculty committee, and adopted thereafter by the Board of Trustees and Heronfield Academy Faculty and Staff.*

At Heronfield Academy, we cherish our collected community, where each person's story is honored and where we work together to ensure that all members experience a full sense of belonging. We appreciate every individual's unique intersectional identities, which include, but are not limited to, their race, gender, age, ability/disability, ethnicity, culture, religion, geographic background, family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and socioeconomic status.

As in all aspects of the Heronfield mission, our commitment to a diverse and inclusive community is rooted in our Core Values:

**Caring:** We meet each person with compassion and empathy. As an intentional part of our core curriculum, we aim to foster a sense of social responsibility in our students.

**Diligence:** Both as individuals and as a community of learners, we continually examine and question our methods and narratives. We seek to recognize and challenge injustice wherever

we may see it, and we will revise our programs and policies to reflect our shared growth.

**Celebration:** We celebrate and affirm the lived experience of our community members, believing that diversity enriches our exchange of ideas and broadens our minds to new perspectives.

**Honesty:** We are committed to openly addressing the challenges of this ongoing work in order to create and maintain a physically and emotionally safe environment for everyone at Heronfield.

**Respect:** We actively promote a culture of social awareness and understanding where different experiences, thoughts, and opinions are respectfully expressed and thoughtfully heard.

We believe that by living these values, we will build a caring and compassionate community for our students, our families, and our faculty and staff as we all seek to contribute to a more just and equitable world.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Heronfield Academy expects all employees, students, and members of the school community to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner and with the highest respect for the personal dignity of each employee, students, community member and visitor. It is the responsibility of each member of our school community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit devoid of any expression of bias or bigotry. Employees, students, and visitors come to Heronfield Academy from many different backgrounds and cultures including different races, religions, and ethnic ancestries. The Academy encourages its members to seek to understand the differences and similarities among us and to celebrate the richness that such diversity provides to an educational community. All members of our school community are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, whether intended or not.

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, mental or physical disability, gender identity or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, mental or physical disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its educational, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other policies and programs.

## **Section II: General School Information**

### **Accreditation and Partnerships**

Heronfield Academy was initially accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and this status was renewed in 2013. Accreditation occurs every ten years, The school began a comprehensive review of all aspects of its operations during the 2022-2023 school year in anticipation of the most recent accreditation process that occurred the spring of 2024, conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE). As a result of this process and a site visit by trained reviewers, the school was provided with a report of findings, commendations and recommendations for its future. Heronfield is an active member of the AISNE as well as the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).



## **Governance**

Heronfield Academy is governed by the school's Board of Trustees, a twelve person coalition of parents, past parents, and community members who provide broad and strategic oversight of the Head of School and the school as a whole. Board members may serve three-year renewable terms.

## **Family and School Communication**

The partnership between school and home is vital to the daily and ongoing operation of our school community, and all communication should support this collaboration. Weekly and other periodic mailings will be shared with the whole school community or with families of each grade level, as needed, and teachers and advisors will be in touch to share further information or to let families know of academic or social concerns as they arise.

Parents should feel free to contact their child's advisor or another faculty and staff member as needed, and the Main Office and the Head of School can provide assistance on many other matters as well. Parents should kindly allow 24 hours in awaiting a response, as faculty and staff members may be quite busy during the school day and may also need to gather information in preparing a reply. For matters of immediate attention, please contact the Main Office at the school's main telephone number, 603-772-9093.

Community members should keep in mind that the email is a helpful tool in exchanging basic information, but that phone calls and in-person meetings provide better opportunities to converse in greater detail and to work through moments of concern.

## **Parent-Teacher Communication and Conferences**

While the parent should view their child's advisor as the primary point of contact, parents are also welcome to contact individual teachers and staff members as needed.

On occasion, both parents and the school can request a parent-school conference to discuss any ongoing academic and behavioral concerns. Such conversations can provide vital opportunities to share observations and to collaborate on a solution that benefits the student and everyone involved.

Twice each year - after the first and third academic quarters - Heronfield hosts student-led parent conferences. As students are asked to lead these conversations, they will work with their advisor to plan how they will review their academic work and speak of their time in the community. The three-way conversation can be valuable in looking back on the most recent weeks in a student's time at Heronfield and to develop goals and strategies for future performance.

## **Current Family Contact Information**

It is vital for each family to provide detailed contact information at the beginning of the school year and to provide updated information upon any change of address or phone numbers. If a student's parents or caregivers will be out of town and the student will be under the care of others, such as relatives or another family, the student's family should provide this information to the school in advance.

## **Multiple Households**

If two parents share custody of a student but live in different households, the school will make every effort to communicate with both parents as much as possible with regard to routine mailings and individual communications as needed. If, however, a parent initiates a conversation by phone or through email, the teacher or staff member will respond to that person and will only add the other parent to subsequent communications with the knowledge of the first parent.

In order for the school to most effectively communicate with parents and support each student, it is important for teachers and administrators to be aware of students who spend time in multiple households. Please be sure to communicate to the school about primary caregivers in the event of an emergency, and whether special co-parenting arrangements exist. If there are court-ordered guidelines regarding visitations, picking up a student from school, parent involvement in field trips or other issues, please include the school in the communication loop. These situations can be stressful for parents and confusing for students, and clear communication is very important to managing such arrangements. Unless otherwise specified, each parent for whom the school has current contact information will receive a copy of the student's report card as well as other informational mailings and electronic communications during the year.

The school also understands that significant others may live in or be affiliated with the household who are unrelated to a parent or student and who are also involved in the student's life. If a parent wishes to designate such an adult as someone who is permitted to receive information about the student, pick up a student from school or otherwise participate in school events, the school requires that a parent provide that information in writing to the school. If there is disagreement between parents about such a designation, the school will not permit the additional adult to have access to the school until the dispute is resolved by the parents and guardians of the student.

### **Religious and Cultural Observances**

Heronfield Academy regularly observes several religious and national holidays throughout the school year. In addition to the school being closed on many of these days, the school will make every effort to provide minimal academic obligations during these observances so that students are able to enjoy and take part in honoring these days with their families.

If a student must miss school in observing a religious holy day that occurs while school is otherwise in session, he or she may do so, and teachers will provide accommodations to make up any work that might be missed.

### **Student Media Information**

The School makes a concerted effort to highlight the accomplishments of our students and faculty, as well as to publicize the strength of the entire program offered by the School, in a variety of media formats. Student Media Information—including student names, photographic images (for example, portrait, picture, video, or other reproductions), audio recordings of students' voices, video recordings of students and/or reproductions of students' work and likenesses—may be used for educational and/or promotional purposes in print and electronic media. Outlets for publication of Student Media Information may include, but not be limited to, the School magazine, marketing materials, the School website, social media accounts newsletters, and local newspapers. The School adheres to the following general guidelines when using Student Media Information:

- Photographs or references to Student Media Information in traditional, print publications, distributed internally to the school community, such as our yearbook and School publications, may include the first and/or last names of students and community members. Names of students may also be included in weekly newsletters and other digital communications shared within the school community.
- Photographs or references to Student Media Information on the public portion of our website will not include last names.
- The School will not post student names on its social media accounts.

Heronfield asks each family to complete a Media Release form at the beginning of each school year. Parents are asked to indicate their wishes on the form if they would like to opt out of the use of Student

Media Information.

### **Visitors to Campus**

All visitors to Heronfield Academy must check in at the Main Office upon arrival. While there are two designated visitor parking places, visitors may park in any available space.

### **Pets on Campus**

We love seeing so many dogs during the morning drop-off and afternoon pickup, but families are reminded that pets are not permitted to be on campus during a school day as a general rule. Well-behaved dogs can come to campus for outside afternoon and evening events, such as a cross-country meet, provided they are on a six-foot leash and are under the control of their owner.

### **Academic Progress, Report Cards, and Transcripts**

Heronfield uses TeacherEase as its online platform for sharing student progress over the course of the year and to share academic information with students and families as needed. Parents and students should keep in mind that a given assessment may not be graded immediately and should allow a few days for each item to be posted, from 2-3 days for a quiz to up to a week to ten days for a paper or a major project. Also, grades and averages posted on TeacherEase reflect a student's performance up to a particular moment in time, and a grade may change as new items are added, especially in the days just before and just after the end of a grading period.

Report cards will be made available for viewing on TeacherEase 7-10 days after the close of each grading period, with a bit more time needed at the end of the year. Student-led conferences will follow the first and third quarters of the year, while narrative comments will be provided with grades and academic behavior ratings after the close of each semester in January and June.

Families may request that the school send a current transcript to a school as part of the secondary school placement process, and the school will send a complete transcript to a departing or graduating student's next school at the conclusion of the academic year.

### **Lost and Found**

Items are placed in the entryway to the Schoolhouse or on shelves in the MPR. Those who are missing items should check there first. Misplaced items might also be found in a cubby area or classroom. As many items look quite similar, families should label any clothing or personal items so that they can be reunited with their owner as easily as possible.

### **School Supplies and Books**

Heronfield will supply the hardcover textbooks for many classes, and families are asked to purchase any workbooks and smaller books, such as novels, that may be used in other classes. A complete list of books and supplies needed for the upcoming school year will be provided to families in July.

### **Gift Giving and Invitations**

It is certainly fun to give gifts or cards to mark a birthday or a special holiday, such as Valentine's Day. In the spirit of creating an inclusive campus, though, we ask that students do not provide gifts or cards to just a few people but rather to the whole advisor group or the whole grade, if desired.

Likewise, we ask that a student refrain from giving invitations to a party to a small group of students at school, and note that such invitations should be shared within the whole grade if they are to be handed out on campus.

## **Teacher Appreciation Gifts**

Just before Winter Break and at the close of the school year, many families choose to honor their child's teacher with a modest gift, a homemade treat, or a card. Many families have also found it helpful to be able to contribute to a school-wide Teacher Appreciation Fund that is then divided among the many faculty and staff members in recognition of their work and dedication. Word of this opportunity will be shared with the parent community in early December and mid-May of each year, though all should understand that there is no obligation to participate and that all gifts of gratitude, even modest ones, are deeply appreciated.

## **Section III: Daily Life at School**

### **School Day Schedule**

The school day begins at 7:55 with either advisory, Community Meeting, or Sanctuary. Students should arrive in time to visit their cubbies and be fully present for this first session of the day. Ideally, students should arrive between 7:40 and 7:50. Should a student need to arrive before 7:40 on occasion, please contact the Main Office to make arrangements for early supervision.

Classes begin at 8:20 each day, with classes either 40 or 45 minutes in length. There is a twenty-minute break period each morning and a 35-minute lunch and recess period. The school day ends at 3:00. Allowing ten minutes for students to once more visit their cubbies and organize for the evening, afternoon carpool will begin at 3:10.

Most after school activities, such as athletics and drama, conclude at 4:15, with parent pickup shortly after. Other activities may last longer, and there may be seasonal rehearsals that also require a later pickup. The school will provide notice of any changes to the after-school schedule as early as possible.

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures**

#### *Morning Drop-Off*

All students must use the front door of the Schoolhouse when arriving. Drivers should come up the driveway, follow around the circle, and come to a complete stop outside the front door. Students should not enter the Schoolhouse until checked in by an adult.

Students may enter the buildings beginning at 7:40, but parents and students should make sure that a faculty staff member is present before doing so. Please do not leave students to wait at the front door alone.

#### *Afternoon Pick-Up*

Afternoon dismissal begins at 3:10 pm, and drivers may arrive before this to wait in line. The first drivers should round the circle, while others may need to turn onto the auxiliary parking lot to allow traffic to avoid backing up on Exeter Road. Drivers should make every effort to keep their vehicles on the paved surfaces. Each driver should place a name placard on their car's dashboard and communicate about any additional students in the day's carpool, allowing for students to be called promptly when cars arrive.

Heronfield faculty and staff members will coordinate afternoon pick-up. They will focus on student safety and on loading cars smoothly and efficiently. Drivers must also place a premium on safety, only moving forward or beginning to exit when signaled to do so. Drivers should not change lanes or move

around other cars unless specifically instructed by a faculty and staff member. Four to five vehicles are loaded simultaneously, and we ask students to always use the passenger sides of cars.

### *Maintaining safety*

By arrangement with the town commissions of Exeter and Hampton Falls, Heronfield Academy must prevent backups onto the roadway at the base of the driveway. If cars are lined up to the end of the driveway, do not wait at the end of the line and thus create a backup on the road. Please drive on further and return in a few minutes.

We ask that you adhere to the posted speed of 5 mph when on our campus, and please turn off your engine, rather than idling, when waiting in the afternoon carpool lane. Families should also be mindful of the importance of being good neighbors and to avoid excessive speeds on nearby residential streets such as Exeter Road (Route 88) and Ashbrook Road.

### **Walking or Riding a Bike To School**

Students are welcome to walk or ride a bike to school. Parents should provide a written note or send an email to the Main Office to let the school know if this will happen, and arrangements can be made to expect this regularly. A student who rides a bike to school should always wear an approved bicycle helmet and should lock the bike up during the school day. Students who are walking or riding a bike home at day's end must let a faculty or staff member know when they are leaving campus.

### **School Closings, Late Openings, and Early Dismissals**

As inclement weather arrives (or other situations, such as a loss of power, require it), Heronfield Academy will share any decisions about school closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals through the automated *One Call Now* system, which will place an automated call to each home landline and parent cell phone number on file with the school. A test of this system will occur in the fall to ensure that each family is properly registered. By and large, Heronfield will align its weather-related decisions with local school district SAU 16, but information that is provided through *One Call Now* and posted on the school's website and social media pages should be considered the official notification.

### **Before and After School Care**

Students can be dropped off as early as 7:40. If family circumstances dictate that a student arrive earlier on occasion, please contact the Main Office to arrange for morning supervision.

After-school supervision will be provided through 4:15 almost every day (with the exception of a small number of days when a vital faculty meeting, an on-campus event, or an impending holiday vacation takes precedence.) This supervision allows families to better coordinate afternoon pickup without needing to make multiple trips to school. Families should make every effort to pick up their children at 3:10, or at the designated time if they are participating in after-school activities. Unforeseen circumstances arise from time to time, though, and parents should know that the school will always provide supervision until the last child is picked up.

### **Student Cubbies**

Each student will be assigned an open cubby space in one of three grade-specific areas of the Schoolhouse or Farmhouse. Students may store books and other supplies in their cubby, and they may personalize it with easily-removable decorations. Hooks will be provided nearby for coats and hats, and students will also be able to leave their boots in the wintertime as needed.

Students may use a backpack during the school day to carry their laptop, books, and notebooks, and should carry books for multiple classes to avoid needing to return to the cubby area after every class.

## **Food at School**

Each student should bring a hearty snack and a healthy lunch to school each day, and perhaps an additional snack if participating in an after-school activity. Refrigeration is not provided, and one's snack and lunch should be stored in one's cubby or backpack. Food should only be eaten during specially designated times such as snack break and lunch. Due to the challenges of allergies, students should not share food with one another.

Many students find it convenient to keep a water bottle with them during the school day, and they can readily be filled at one of many dispensing stations on campus.

On occasion, students may wish to bring a treat to school to celebrate a birthday. Parents who wish to support their child in doing so should bring such treats - enough for the whole grade - to the Main Office (with a complete list of ingredients) in the morning, and the treats will be shared at break or lunch recess. In the spirit of inclusivity, it would be helpful to provide an alternative item for any student with dietary restrictions.

Gum is never permitted at school, and candy is reserved for special occasions like class or grade level celebrations. Students should ask permission from their advisor before bringing bags of candy to share with others, even for an occasion such as a birthday.

## **School Meetings and Assemblies**

On Tuesday mornings, the students, faculty and staff gather for Community Meeting, and Wednesdays bring Sanctuary. While these gatherings have a different purpose and tone, both offer wonderful opportunities for sharing and growing as we tell and hear stories, celebrate one another, and learn a little bit more about the world that we all live in.

Community Meetings provide time to talk about campus events, to tell of our life experiences, and to connect over topics of shared interest. Most teachers have presented at a Community Meeting this year, and on occasion, a faculty member will suggest a relative or friend, or community member whose story might be meaningful.

Our Wednesday Sanctuary sessions have a different flavor and rhythm. The sessions always begin with a song and a moment to greet one another before reciting the school prayer. Sanctuary speakers come from our own faculty, our Board of Trustees, and the wider community, and each one encourages us to consider new perspectives and ideas. We have welcomed leaders and speakers from a number of different religions, realizing how each differs in its practices and yet how they all center on key values of respect, kindness, and compassion. Our faculty speakers share from their own experiences, often weaving a reading with their own history to help us consider a greater lesson.

While these two weekly meetings are intended for the on-campus community, we will invite parents to attend if their own children might be speaking or performing, and of course there are a few occasions for which we will welcome the whole parent community, such as December's Festival of Light or the Last Sanctuary in June.

## **The Advisory Program**

Each grade is divided into three advisor groups headed by a faculty member. The student's advisor is the one adult on campus who knows the student best and looks out for his or her academic, social, physical and emotional wellbeing each day and throughout the year.

Advisor groups will meet during the first portion of the morning on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Group conversations might range from campus happenings to study skills to current events, and

activities from circle discussions to group games are designed to help students know one another better and to build cohesiveness and camaraderie. On occasion, the advisor groups within a grade will gather for a class meeting.

The advisor should be the primary point of contact for the student and their parents as any questions and topics arise. At various times during the year, the advisor will meet individually with each student in the group to discuss personal goals, effort and progress, and the advisor will work with the student to prepare for the student-led conferences that occur after the first and third quarters.

### **Announcements & Information**

Heronfield's Main Office will share *Field Notes* - the school's electronic newsletter - to all families, faculty and staff, and board members each week, usually on Tuesday afternoons. While the school will make every effort to limit the number of communications sent home each week, an additional letter or notice will be shared on occasion.

## **Section IV: The Academic Program**

### **Curriculum & Course Load**

Heronfield Academy seeks to provide an array of engaging learning experiences that encourage students to build academic skills and habits while broadening their minds and perspectives. Moving beyond memorization and rote skills, Heronfield students learn to think critically, to learn both independently and in collaboration with others, and to seek creative and reason-based solutions in all aspects of their learning. Students' minds and bodies develop tremendously in the middle school years, and Heronfield's teachers design lessons and learning experiences that reflect each grade's developmental stages and also encourage a progression of skills and thought that enables students to grow in this important stage of their adolescence.

Core courses at Heronfield include English, math, humanities (history), science, Spanish, and physical education. Core classes meet four or five times each week, and each course builds on the studies of the previous year. Students in all grades will also have regular TEA (technology, engineering and arts) and health & wellness classes. Sixth grade students will have music class twice each week throughout the year, while seventh and eighth grade students will have classes in drama and in leadership & life skills, depending on the semester.

### **Independent Study**

Almost all students find that their academic interests are met by the array of courses in each grade year, but on occasion a student may have already completed a particular level, such as in math or language, before enrolling at Heronfield. In such cases, the school will work with the family to develop an alternate, independent course of study during the same time period, often making use of an online course with on-campus support to guide the student's learning experience.

### **Academic Accommodations**

From time to time, it becomes important for a family to arrange a comprehensive assessment about their child's learning profile. The first step in this process is often a conversation between the parents, the Head of School, the student's advisor and one or more teachers, and this conversation can be initiated by the home or the school. If an assessment is considered an appropriate step, the family's home district can often be a good starting point, as each student qualifies for such an assessment even if they do not attend their districted school.

Upon completion of the assessment, it is best for the family to meet with a small group of faculty and

staff members to discuss the results and to explore whether one or more of the suggested accommodations will be put in place to better support the student's experience at Heronfield.

If a student has already taken part in such an evaluation before attending Heronfield, it will be important for the family to share a testing report with the school prior to the beginning of the school year so that any accommodations can be considered from the outset. Students who present the school with appropriate documentation will be granted those requested academic accommodations that are supported by the documentation and considered reasonable in this educational setting.

Even after supportive services and accommodations have been put in place, a student may still not be able to fulfill their academic requirements satisfactorily. In such instances, the student's advisor and the Head of School may notify the student's parents that the accommodations put into place may not suffice to ensure the student's success at the school.

At that time, the Head of School, the advisor, and the student's parents will discuss whether it makes sense for the student to continue at the school. If there is a disagreement, the school will decide, in its sole discretion, whether to issue a re-enrollment contract to the student. No waivers of academic graduation requirements will be granted unless a special arrangement has been made through the Head of School.

Although the school endeavors to provide the finest academic programs and assistance to students in helping them to achieve their academic goals and advancement, no particular student success is, or can be, guaranteed. These are primarily the result of the individual student's effort, ability and attitude.

### **Assessments/Test/Examinations**

In general, teachers try to coordinate major assessments and projects so that no more than two such items fall on a single day. On occasion, though, a rescheduled event or a shift in the school calendar causes an unforeseen moment in which a student has more than two major obligations. When this occurs, the student should speak with his or her advisor or teachers to develop a solution that works for all involved.

### **Homework**

Heronfield Academy prepares students for challenging high school programs, and homework can be an important aspect of this preparation. Homework allows for greater depth and breadth of curriculum and it also helps students build vital skills of self-discipline, time management and responsibility. At the same time, the school is united with parents in recognizing the need for family time as well as time to take part in after-school activities, both formal and informal. Heronfield Academy values family time and student participation in extracurricular activities.

Seeking to find the balance between these ideals, the school suggests the following guidelines for nightly homework:

- Homework in the fall of the sixth grade will start at an average of 60 minutes per day, increasing to 75 minutes in the spring.
- In the seventh grade, homework will average 75 minutes per day in the fall, increasing to 90 minutes.
- In the eighth grade, homework will average 90 minutes per day in the fall, increasing to two hours.

Families should know that the actual amount of assigned work will vary from night to night, and



different students in the same grade may need a bit more time or a bit less time to complete the homework of a given course. Students should not dedicate an excessive amount of time to one's homework, and they and their parents should speak to the student's teachers and advisor if nightly homework presents overwhelming challenges and pushes the student to frustration.

### **Academic Obligations**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, community gatherings, advisory meetings, and individual conferences with teachers as part of their academic commitment. Proper dress and behavior are expected at all times while at the Academy. Students are also expected to complete all work missed during an excused absence and to take responsibility and initiative for arranging a make-up schedule with their teachers.

### **Grading System and Honors**

Students are provided with grades and narrative feedback on many assignments each quarter, and they and their parents can view an ongoing record of their work in TeacherEase. As noted earlier, students and families should keep in mind that it might take some time for each assignment to be posted and that a grade may change quite a bit as many assignments are entered near the end of a quarter.

Core classes - courses that meet several times a week- are evaluated using a standard letter grade scale (A+, A, A- and so forth), while less-frequent courses such as music, drama, health & wellness, and leadership & life skills may be evaluated on a Pass-Fail basis, depending on the subject area.

Heronfield Academy does not have designated Honors courses, though math sections may be developed to place together the students with stronger experience and proclivity, and also those students who can benefit from a deeper review of major concepts. It is the school's intention to group students in such courses with academic peers so that they can comfortably build their skills and also build confidence in their work.

### **Academic Standards and Promotion**

In general, students will advance to the next grade level each academic year. Class absences and failures in one or more courses may jeopardize a student's advancement from one grade to the next. If a student is not able to maintain academic progress even with all aspects of support in place, it may be necessary for the school and the student's family to discuss whether it is appropriate for the student to remain enrolled at Heronfield.

### **Academic Concerns**

Students are expected to make progress in all courses across the school year, but should difficulties arise for any reason, it is important for the student, the student's advisor, and parent to meet with any teachers in subjects of concern to develop a plan of action. As severe academic difficulties often come as a result of emotional difficulties at school or at home, the student's parents should be in contact with the student's advisor as needed, and the school may call on counseling resources as well. While teachers may excuse students from some academic tasks to allow a student to more easily catch up on work, especially following an extended absence, it will be imperative to establish a plan by which major assignments will be completed.

### **Secondary School Advising**

Heronfield Academy seeks to support all families as they consider the secondary schools - public, parochial, or independent - that will be most suitable to the student and family's interests. One faculty member heads the school's HASSA (Heronfield Academy Secondary School Advising) team, with two

others in supporting roles, and they work with families beginning in the spring of the seventh grade year to guide them through the process that will take shape in eighth grade. The HASSA team will provide group information sessions at first, and they will meet with individual families as the eighth grade year begins to discuss the schools of interest and to suggest others that may be worth considering. The HASSA team will provide information about the SSATs and possible test prep options, and they will also make sure that all documents - such as transcripts and the school's letter of recommendation are sent to each school.

While the HASSA team will communicate with families regularly and will support families through the process, it is important to note that families are responsible for sending the application to each school, and it is highly recommended that the student speak to each teacher personally about writing any letters of recommendation.

### **Standardized Testing**

Heronfield Academy does not regularly provide comprehensive standardized assessments to its students, rather relying on teachers to evaluate each student's academic and personal growth.

Students who are interested in parochial and independent schools may be asked to take the SSAT as part of the application process. The school will host one or more testing sessions for Heronfield students, but families may certainly choose to have their child sit for the assessment at another location. In any case, the school will provide options and information about test preparation so that Heronfield's students can approach the assessment with calm and confidence.

### **Graduation**

Heronfield Academy hosts commencement ceremonies on our campus. The event often begins with a welcome and invocation, and the school invites a notable member of the community to provide a graduation address. The highlight of the event occurs as students receive their diplomas. A statement of tribute for each student is read aloud, and a framed copy is presented as well. Graduation for the Class of 2025 is scheduled for Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 5:30 pm, and each graduate can invite as many guests as they wish.

## **Section V: Student Conduct**

### **The Heronfield Academy Honor Code**

In the school's inaugural year, Heronfield's first students developed an Honor Code that continues to outline the conduct that contributes to a positive community:

*We the students of Heronfield Academy hereby declare that we will adhere to this Honor Code:*

- *We will use kind language.*
- *We will respect others.*
- *We will celebrate others and ourselves.*
- *We will remain trustworthy to all.*
- *We will be welcoming to all.*
- *We will always be honest.*
- *We will represent our school respectfully at all times.*

Building from these seven statements, it is expected that all members of the Heronfield Academy community will treat one another with kindness and respect, and that every member is

able to feel a full sense of belonging within the school and its program.

### **Discipline at Heronfield**

While our students, faculty and staff members largely uphold these ideals every day, it is natural and even developmentally appropriate in a community of people that difficulties arise from time to time. When this occurs, the school will seek to address the issue at hand and any underlying factors, and every effort will be made to develop a resolution that builds upon open dialogue and respects the dignity of each person. While consequences (such as a detention, or a suspension from school) may be necessary in response to a moment of challenge, such measures will be part of a larger effort to correct behaviors and restore relationships between all involved. In cases of moderate or ongoing concern, a family and the school may agree that the student should remain at home for a Day of Reflection, essentially a time-out from the school community, to consider one's actions and how to be a better member of the student body.

As with other forms of teaching at Heronfield Academy, this process of working through such moments provides support, individuality, accountability, and opportunities for growth. While the school will seek to partner with families to best move forward after incidents of wrong doing, the Head of School retains the ultimate authority over the standing of students in the school and will lead any determination of appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Routine incidents of misbehavior are often handled by teachers and advisors in the moment, and it is common for such moments to be followed by an email or a call to the families of the students involved - both the wrongdoer and the recipient of the misbehavior - to discuss what occurred and the steps that were taken, and to build a partnership for moving forward.

When minor misbehavior becomes part of a larger pattern, or if the initial action warrants such attention by itself, the situation will be referred to the Head of School, who will discuss the concern and any necessary actions with the student's parents.

Finally, many secondary schools ask very direct questions about a student's academic and behavioral standing - especially whether a student has been suspended for any reason - as part of the application or registration process. It is Heronfield's policy to be honest in answering such questions, though the Secondary School Advising team will also do its best to advocate for a student's growth as much as possible and will work with families to ensure the best opportunity for their child moving forward. A Day of Reflection, as described above, is not considered a formal separation from the community and would not be reported to secondary schools.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

As described above, Heronfield expects that all students will conduct themselves as kind, respectful, and responsible members of the school community. While no list could possibly include all circumstances where disciplinary action will be taken, in general, any act that affects the social, emotional, or academic wellbeing of others or that adversely impacts the ongoing operations or the reputation of the school is prohibited. Such prohibited conduct can include (but is not limited to):

- Violations of any federal, state, or local law, or other conduct which, in the judgment of the school leadership, endangers or threatens the personal health, safety, welfare, or property of any member of the academic community.
- Engaging in discrimination, harassment, bullying, or hazing in violation of law or school policy.
- Violations of any other school policies and regulations as stated in this Handbook and any other rule or regulation that may be enacted.
- Fraudulent or dishonest conduct, including academic dishonesty.

- Failure to comply with instructions of the school faculty and staff.
- Intentional disruption or obstruction of teaching or administrative activities.
- Theft or damage relating to any property belonging to the school or a member of the Heronfield Community or visitors to the school.
- Verbal or physical abuse or violence, or threats of such conduct, upon any member of the academic community, including bullying, cyberbullying, and sexual misconduct.
- Any behavior that is socially or morally unacceptable and unbecoming of a Heronfield student, including actions that reflect serious disregard for the school and the members of the school community.
- Any use or association with illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco (including vaping products) and related items.
- Any use, possession, or storage of any firearms, fireworks, or other explosive device.
- Any misuse of or tampering with fire-warning devices, protective equipment, and other devices designed to protect the safety of the community.
- Repeated offenses, which, by themselves, would not warrant suspension or expulsion, but collectively indicate that further attendance by the student is not in the best interests of the student or of the school.

### **Out-of-School Behavior**

Heronfield relies on the willingness and good faith of parents to help us ensure that our school is a safe and welcoming environment for all students. If Heronfield becomes aware that students have engaged in inappropriate behavior toward each other outside of school, the school will inform all parties and encourage appropriate dialogue and consequences in individual homes to correct the behavior. If the incident affects the students at school or affects the wider operations of the school program, the school may become more deeply involved in order to assist all parties in resolving the issue, which may involve the implementation of consequences.

Incidents of inappropriate off-campus behavior often involve email, texts (including group chats), and social media. The school will include programming on appropriate use in its Health & Wellness program, and it is hoped that families will support student growth in this area with conversations at home regarding family values and the thoughtful use of technology.

### **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

Academic Dishonesty, or cheating, occurs when a student uses or provides unauthorized aid of any kind in completing academic work, especially graded assessments. While these violations are most commonly associated with tests, they can also occur on homework assignments where a student improperly uses resources or works together with a classmate when specifically instructed to complete the assignment on one's own.

Plagiarism is a particular type of academic dishonesty that involves using the words or ideas of someone else and making them appear to be one's own by not giving credit to the originator of them. It is not enough to paraphrase information gained from a source: one must still acknowledge the author of the ideas presented even if the words have been changed. This most often occurs with research papers, but it is important to develop the habit and skills of attributing the sources of any material used in completing schoolwork, such as a poem, a video, or an image.

Heronfield Academy will treat all instances of academic dishonesty with a high level of concern. Each situation will be evaluated as to its nature and according to the age and record of the student, and the willingness of each student to both be honest about their actions and grow from their mistakes will be important factors. Consequences may include a lowered grade (or even no grade) on the assignment, an obligation to redo the work or complete an alternate assignment, and

possibly additional disciplinary measures.

### **Other Disciplinary Responses**

Depending on the circumstances, other disciplinary or non-disciplinary responses may be required such as community service, counseling, research and essay writing, alcohol or drug assessment or testing, restitution, or whatever other disciplinary or responsive action the Head of School or designee may determine to be appropriate under the circumstances.

### **Head's Leave**

Students and parents understand and accept that a student may be required to go on a "Head's Leave" such as during the investigation of a serious matter. Head's Leave is considered a non-disciplinary leave and should not be considered a conclusion by the school of any wrongdoing. During a Head's Leave, the school will work with students to continue their educational experience to the extent possible such as through tutoring, online learning and other methods.

### **Investigations**

After a complaint has been brought to the attention of the school, an impartial, fact-finding investigation of the complaint is conducted by the Head of School or designee. This investigation may include (but is not necessarily limited to) interviews with the complainant, alleged target, witnesses to the incident, the person or persons against whom the complaint was made, and any other parties who witnessed or may otherwise have information relevant to the alleged incident. The investigator may consult with teachers, the school counselor, staff, the parents/guardians of the student or students who were allegedly targeted, and/or the parents/guardians of the student or students alleged to have been the aggressors, or any other person whom the investigator(s) deem to have knowledge about, or circumstances surrounding, the complaint. The school and its officials may speak to a student about an incident before contacting parents or caregivers, but every effort will be made to communicate with parents in a timely manner. The school, in its sole discretion, may also deem it appropriate to use external investigators to review a complaint. In certain circumstances, the school may be obligated to report misconduct to external authorities, such as to law enforcement or the child welfare agency. The school cooperates with external agencies and may therefore postpone its own investigation into misconduct as appropriate.

### **Cooperation with Investigations**

Students are expected to cooperate in investigations and be honest when doing so. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may itself be cause for disciplinary action. If a student refuses to participate or cooperate at any stage of an investigation for whatever reason including, but not limited to, pending criminal charges, the school reserves the right to take action, including proceeding without a statement from the student, or to require the student to withdraw from the school.

### **Publicizing Disciplinary Responses**

Most often, disciplinary cases will be handled with discretion to uphold the dignity of all persons involved and to provide the greatest opportunity for personal growth. It is also the school's practice to only discuss each student's situation with his or her family, and not to discuss the handling of one student's case with another family.

On rare occasions, the entire school may be informed about any aspect of a disciplinary matter when, in the sole judgment of the Head of School, it is deemed appropriate to help further the educational or learning experience of the school community.

### **Withdrawal**

If parents decide to withdraw a student for any reason, they must notify the Head of School in writing of their decision. The official date of withdrawal will be the date of written notification or the date the

student actually departs from the School, whichever comes later. A withdrawn student may not return to campus until after all current students have graduated, except by permission of the Head of School.

## **Section VI: School Policies**

### **General Conduct**

All members of the Heronfield Academy community are expected to treat one another with respect and kindness at all times. As a community of people, we come together with different experiences and different perspectives but for a common purpose. Our interactions, even those that occur over the phone or through electronic communication, should build upon and model the school community values. As moments of disagreements arise, community members should listen for understanding, identify common beliefs and work with others to develop solutions that help everyone learn and move forward together.

### **Attendance and Absences**

Heronfield expects that all students will attend school in person as much as possible throughout the school year. At the same time, the school also advises families to keep their children at home if they are sick as it is important for students to focus on their health and also avoid transmitting an illness to others. As a general rule, students should remain away from school for a full 24 hours if they have a fever or if they have been vomiting.

If a student is not able to attend school, he or she can communicate with their teachers or classmates to learn about any work to be completed, and many teachers post assignments and resources through Google Classroom and TeacherEase as well. Teachers will support students in their efforts to make up any work or complete assessments. Students are allowed a period of time to make up the work that mirrors the length of the absence; that is, if a student misses three days of school, the student will have three days to work with teachers to get caught up.

If a family anticipates that their student will miss one or more days of school, it is best for the parent to communicate any plans well in advance with the Main Office and the child's advisor. As the dates of the absence draw closer, the student should connect with his or her teachers to discuss any work to be completed, whether before or during the time away, or upon return.

A student must attend at least half of his or her classes during the school day to be able to take part in after-school activities, including athletic practices or competitions and any evening social events. A student who has gone home sick during the school day may not participate in any such after-school activities.

### **Remote Learning**

It is the school's deeply held belief that teaching and learning occur best when teachers and students are together in the same classroom, and as such the school will place a high emphasis on in-person instruction and will not offer opportunities for individual remote learning except in the most extreme cases, such as a medical condition that makes it impossible or impractical for a student to attend school.

Under extraordinary circumstances, however, such as an epidemic, pandemic, governmental action or other reason, the school may be required to, or may determine that for the health and safety of the school community, it must initiate a remote learning process on a school-wide basis.

If this is the case, our faculty and staff will take great care in designing a curriculum and activities that can be followed and engaged in safely at home. Nonetheless our teachers, coaches, and advisors are

unfortunately unable to be there with their students to supervise all activities associated with the curriculum so we must ask parents and guardians to play that role. Please note that course material and activities are designed for a particular grade and

level of experience and thus may not be appropriate for younger siblings who are also at home and yet may hear remote lessons or activities being delivered. Parents and guardians are therefore asked to play an active role in monitoring their student's engagement with the remote learning material.

In order to facilitate remote learning, the school may record audio and video of certain classes, meetings, and other school related events ("Recordings"). Students and other individuals will participate in Recordings in real-time, as well as view Recordings at later times. The school does not intend to edit the Recordings. Thus, in addition to educational content, the Recordings will likely capture the students' and other participants' names, appearances, voices, personal information and characteristics, activities, and any other information that occurs or is provided during the Recordings. Students and parents are not permitted to make their own recordings. If and when the school transitions to a remote learning environment, families will be given more detailed information about the process, and will be asked to consent to the school's recording of remote learning activities, as described above.

Families are reminded that the school's responsible use of technology policy is in effect during any period of digital learning. Students are expected to treat each other, faculty, and staff with respect and to refrain from any inappropriate conduct. If a student feels uncomfortable or worse as a result of an interaction with another student or a school employee, the student and/or parents should report the concern immediately to the Head of School. The school's policies for addressing reports of misconduct contained elsewhere in this Handbook will be followed to address the situation.

Regardless of the learning environment for the school year, families are asked to understand that the tuition and fees families provide are in exchange for learning, academic credit, and certain non-academic services that will be provided whether in person, in a hybrid environment, or entirely remotely. The school, in its sole discretion, will calculate the actual reduction in the costs of operations (if any) as a result of a transition to remote learning and may refund that amount in proportion to the actual tuition and fees paid by the parents.

### **Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals**

Students who arrive after 7:55am should check in with the Main Office before proceeding to their advisor group or to class. If a family anticipates that a child will be late to school, such as following an early appointment, it is helpful to communicate with the Main Office and the child's advisor so that teachers are able to plan accordingly.

If a student needs to leave school early for a family obligation or an appointment, parents should share these plans with the Main Office and the advisor in advance. When the parent or designated adult arrives on that day, the Main Office will communicate with the child's classroom teacher so that they can be dismissed as planned. Please note that it can be very difficult to arrange for individual students to depart just before regular dismissal (such as at 2:55) to quickly make it to an after-school activity or appointment, and we ask that families adhere to the usual afternoon pick up protocol as much as possible. For those who need to depart quickly, it will be best for parents to arrive early and gain a place near the front of the carpool line.

If a student begins feeling ill while at school and needs to go home for the day, the Main Office will call one or both parents to make such arrangements. As the school does not have an infirmary or a school nurse on staff, it is important for parents to partner with the school and to make alternate arrangements as such needs arise.

## **Security**

Heronfield is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all of its community members, and many security measures underscore this commitment while at the same time providing for a welcoming and friendly school environment.

The main entrance doors of all of the school's main buildings are locked at all times and can only be opened by the use of a keypad, and side doors should be kept locked. All students and faculty and staff members will be given an access code to be used when passing between buildings. Security cameras provide consistent monitoring of exterior campus spaces and make it possible to note anyone who is coming up the school driveway.

Heronfield also maintains a strong relationship with the town of Hampton Falls Police Department. The chief of police and the police department are very responsive to the school's requests for advice and assistance, and the department regularly drives through the campus during the school day, in the evenings, and on weekends to maintain a level of oversight and vigilance.

## **Fire Drills and other Emergency Drills**

Heronfield conducts regular fire drills to practice evacuating buildings safely, quickly and quietly. Before the first of these drills in the fall, advisors will review all instructions with students to ensure understanding and compliance. In addition, regular inspections of the campus by town fire officials and testing of the fire suppression system will ensure that the school is well prepared for any fire emergency.

The school will also conduct regular drills for other security situations, including shelter-in-place and lockdown situations. The school's Safety and Crisis team will meet regularly to ensure that Heronfield remains up to date on best practices across a range of possible events and maintains its commitment to provide a safe campus environment.

## **Dress Code and Appearance**

In the spring of 2021, a new code of student dress guidelines was developed by a combined faculty and student committee. The revised guidelines begin with the belief that student clothing choices should allow students to safely and comfortably take part in all aspects of the school day, and the guidelines also elevate the important principles of equity and inclusion. A full overview of the Student Dress Guidelines is included in Appendix A at the end of the handbook.

## **Field Trip Permissions**

Heronfield students participate in many field trips during the school year, and families are asked to complete one comprehensive form that provides permission for students to leave campus with a teacher for a school activity. For each trip, the lead teacher will provide specific details about the event, such as date, destination, time of departure and return, and contact information for all adults on the trip.

## **Harassment and Bullying**

Heronfield Academy strives to provide a teaching and learning environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment, including conduct also known as bullying. The school will not tolerate any type of unlawful harassment or bullying, which is defined by the website [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) as:

*Aggressive acts made with harmful intent, repeatedly inflicted by one or more students against another. Acts may be physical, verbal, or indirect, such as social exclusion, or electronic, such as sending threatening messages. What distinguishes bullying from mere unkindness or aggression is that bullying is repetitive and involves a real or perceived power imbalance*



*between the perpetrator and the victim.*

Heronfield will provide regular programming to encourage students to build healthy relationships and have positive interactions with peers, and this will include lessons about bullying. If any student or parent, however, observes or becomes aware of any instance in which bullying - including insults, taunts, or challenges - has occurred or is suspected, that person should promptly report the situation to a faculty member and to the Head of School.

The Head of School or designee will lead the school in investigating alleged acts of bullying and will take action to ensure that the situation is resolved and that the bullying actions cease. While restorative practices will have a role in many disciplinary situations to allow all parties to move forward, the Head of School may assign consequences including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

### **Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse and Safe Schools Reporting Requirements Heronfield**

Academy stands against all incidents of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, and a full overview of the school's approach to these topics can be found in Appendix B at the back of this Handbook, along with an overview of New Hampshire's Safe Schools reporting requirements that must be considered whenever a potential crime has occurred.

### **Electronic Communications and Responsible Use**

In this day and age, electronic communication can take place in many forms ranging from email to texting to social media platforms. It is deeply important that every member of the community uphold the school's Core Values and in any type of communication, and this extends to electronic contact of any sort. All such communication should be neutral to positive in tone, and it should never cast aspersion on a person or persons, and should never cast the school or members of the community in a negative light. Anonymous postings should be avoided, and all communication that occurs using school accounts or school devices, or that involves exchanges between or about members of the school community, are governed by the school's Acceptable Use of School Technology Policy (See Appendix C).

Though it is not the school's intention or capability to monitor any use of technology outside of its own network, students should understand that whether physically on campus or off campus, whether during the school day or at night, on vacation or at any other time while enrolled at the school, whether linked to the school's network from in school or from a remote location or not at all, or using their own personal computer or communication device on or off campus, students are expected to comply with this Responsible Use Policy and any applicable policies and procedures as long as they are enrolled at the school, as set forth in this Handbook and as further described below. Students are prohibited from engaging in cyberbullying or any form of harassment using technology that may negatively impact a member of our school community.

All members should hold in mind that there are limitations to electronic communication. Email and similar means are best suited to providing factual information. As opinions and even opposing views come forward, it is best for all parties to schedule a time to meet in person or by phone call.

### **Student Laptops**

In order to complete technology-based assignments and activities both at home and at school, Heronfield requests that each student be outfitted with a laptop for use during the school day. Many brands and models can serve student needs, though Chromebooks are most compatible with the array of programs and applications used in the academic program. Heronfield will work with families who receive tuition assistance and provide a school-owned device for student use, if requested.

Each student is responsible for having the device charged and ready for use at school. Though each device is controlled by the student and their family, devices may only be used during class at the direction of a teacher, and a student should seek permission of a teacher to use their device during a non-class time such as break or lunch.

### **Email and Google Apps for Education**

Heronfield will provide each student with a special Google mail account ending in @heronfieldacademy.org. These accounts are managed by the school, and they can only receive emails from accounts within the Heronfield network. Please note that faculty and staff email addresses end in @heronfield.org, with the prefix made up of the person's first initial and last name.

Student email accounts are part of Heronfield's partnership with Google Apps for Education, which provides students with an array of web-based applications to support their academic work, including Drive, Slides, Classroom, Calendar, and Forms.

### **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

As it is important for students to be present and focused on the activity of the day, students are not permitted to use cell phones while at school. If a student possesses a phone while at school, such as if they will need it for an activity after school, the phone will need to be off and not seen during the school day.

If a student needs to communicate with a parent while at school, he or she should seek permission from a teacher or staff member to use one of the school phones.

## **Section VII: Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities**

### **Athletics**

Heronfield offers three sports across the school year: cross country in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track & field in the spring. Participation is voluntary, though many students take part each season. Practices occur two to three days each week on a set schedule, and usually occur from 3:15 to 4:15. Each student should be prepared with the requisite attire and shoes to participate fully in each sport, and the school will provide team uniforms for games and meets.

Each season features interscholastic competitions with other area schools, and transportation will be provided to and from Heronfield for any away events. If a student's family attends an away game, the family may arrange for the child to travel directly home from the event rather than return to school. For more information on Heronfield's athletics program, contact Athletic Director Arin Jordan.

### **Music**

Heronfield Academy has a deep tradition in music instruction and performance. Sixth grade students have regularly scheduled music classes and are required to learn to play an instrument, and those with experience are often encouraged to take up a different instrument. Students can also choose to participate in one of several ensembles that meet during study hall period and just after school, and the school chorus and a music production club round out the offerings. The music director will provide more information about the music program and about additional after school lessons at the outset of the school year.

Heronfield's musicians perform for our community throughout the year, and the December Festival of Light and the Spring Concert in late May are especially notable events. For more information on Heronfield's music program, contact Music Director Rob Thomas.

### **Clubs and Activities**

A selection of clubs and activities will be offered to students during the study hall periods and at other times each week. Clubs will be designed to reflect student interests and to extend the skills that they are learning in their classes. A full description of these clubs and activities will be made available early in the school year. Students are encouraged to participate as much as they like, but many students will find it helpful to complete schoolwork during the study hall period as well.

### **Yearbook**

For the last several years, Heronfield has prepared a yearbook to capture the people and events of the school year. Students are encouraged to become more involved in the design and production of the yearbook. The yearbook is provided as a gift to each graduating eighth grade student, and families of seventh and sixth grade students are welcome to purchase a yearbook as well.

### **Library**

Heronfield maintains a Reading Room in the Farmhouse, largely stocked with fiction and narrative nonfiction titles, both classic and contemporary. The collection allows students to regularly select books for reading as part of their English classes or as pleasure reading, and students are welcome to take books home at any time, as long as they let their English teacher know. The collection has been built over time through the generosity of our families, and donations are welcomed throughout the year.

### **Field Trips**

As noted in Section Five (School Policies), Heronfield's classes regularly travel off campus to extend their learning and to participate in service opportunities. Information about each of these trips, along with the contact information for all teacher chaperones, will be provided several days in advance.

## **Section VIII: Special Events**

### **Special Days**

On occasion, Heronfield takes a break from its regular classes to teach, learn, and build community in different ways. Some examples of these special days include:

***Grandparents and Special Friends Day*** - This day provides a wonderful opportunity for grandparents and other invited guests to spend a few hours at Heronfield and to learn about the student experience. Guests will take part in a couple of classes and that will also gather to hear more about Heronfield from leaders among the students, faculty and staff.

***Community Day*** - A celebration of the breadth and richness of our community, this day is set aside to help us consider the ways we become stronger by knowing and valuing one another. Recent Community Days have included guest speakers and artisans as well as small group discussions and school-wide art projects to celebrate the day's theme.

***Field Day*** - Often held on a sunny day near the end of the year, Field Day is about friendly

competitions of many sorts that highlight the spirit of our school. Games and events range from athletic contests to brainy games to silly relay races, and each of the mixed grade groups comes up with team names, songs and cheers to win extra points.

### **Evening Student Events**

Friday nights throughout the year provide the perfect times for students to get together with classmates and to enjoy some good, clean, wholesome fun.

**Game Nights** - Grade-specific Game Nights will begin in the fall, and they are not to be missed! The advising team for each grade and other teachers host an evening of high-energy and high-laughter outdoor games such as sharks and minnows, manhunt, sardines, family musical chairs, and charades.

**School Dances** - At least three all-school dances will be spread across the year, each with a different theme and with the winter Semi-Formal providing a chance to dress up for the party. Teacher chaperones will work with the community leading up to and during each dance to make sure everyone's included in the evening and that everyone has a great time.

### **Parent Gatherings**

The Heronfield Community extends beyond the students to include parents and caregivers as well, and the school looks forward to hosting a number of on-campus events in the fall to help families and parents get to know one another and to share the spirit of the campus. Gatherings occur throughout the year leading up to our Spring Fundraising Gala in May. In addition, the school looks forward to partnering with some families who might host smaller parent get-togethers and admissions coffees at their homes.

### **Back to School Night**

Usually hosted toward the end of September, Back to School Night offers parents a first-hand view of the Heronfield experience as they come to the campus and meet their child's teachers while moving through a set of abbreviated classes. It's a wonderful time to get to know the members of the faculty and staff and to connect with other parents as well.

## **Section IX: Health and Wellness**

### **Health Care at School**

Students who do not feel well enough to attend school and take active part in all activities should remain home for the day, and the student can be confident in working with teachers to make up any assignments and assessments that were missed.

Students who become ill or injured while at school will be guided to the Main Office, where they will receive basic care, whether a bandage or an ice pack or a chance to rest as needed. As situations warrant, a parent or caregiver will be called to discuss the incident and to arrange for the student to go home or to receive further medical care if needed. A member of the faculty and staff will always remain with any student with a medical need until the student returns to class or leaves school with a parent or caregiver.

Students who miss school due to a fever or vomiting must remain home for at least a full day after the symptoms have subsided.

## **Mental Health Support**

Middle School can be a difficult time for many students, and while some navigate these years smoothly, others may need a bit more guidance and support. Heronfield is committed to supporting the emotional and mental well-being of each student, and the school has added a part-time counselor to the faculty and staff for 2024-2025. The school counselor will coordinate mental health conversations at Heronfield, working on different occasions with students (individually and in groups), faculty and staff, and families. While the counselor might, at times, meet with students on a one-to-one basis, the school counselor should not be viewed as an ongoing therapist for any students and will refer families to outside specialists if long-term care is warranted. Likewise, the school counselor may not see Heronfield students in their private practice.

The shared efforts to navigate mental health needs will be best supported by early and ongoing communications between home and school as any situations arise that might affect the student's overall approach to school or their ability to engage in the school day. Likewise, the student's advisor or another teacher may be in touch to share news from the school day that might impact the student's emotions at home. This partnership will be even more important as longer, more challenging situations arise, such as anxiety and depression, but families can rely on the school and the experience of its teachers for guidance and support. The school has ongoing relationships with several mental health outlets who can provide additional resources as needed.

## **Medical Accommodations and Medical Leave**

At Heronfield we seek to foster the emotional and physical well-being of students and to support our students with a high standard of personal care. While the school will work to support any student whose medical needs may require special considerations, the safety of the student and of others must be our first priority. In addition, a student's ability to participate in academic and athletic programs needs to be at a level that serves the student's learning and growth, and at a level that faculty and staff can reasonably manage and support.

In instances when there are concerns about supporting a student who needs special consideration for medical reasons, the circumstances will be reviewed by the Head of School. The Head of School or designee may also request to consult with the student's treating physician or mental health specialist. When medical recommendations call for an adjustment in the student's scheduled commitments, the Head of School will work with the faculty to evaluate whether suggested accommodations can be supported. In matters regarding medical leaves and withdrawals, the Head of School is responsible for assessing the school's preparedness to support the student well without compromising other students or faculty and staff.

Should physical or mental health needs require a student to take a medical leave away from the school community, the Head of School and the student's advisor will work with the student's family to consider how and whether a student can reasonably complete his or her academic obligations and complete the studies of each course. On occasion, some teachers may be able to waive some assignments to allow the student to focus energies on other essential tasks, but coursework must be completed according to the guidance of each teacher to earn course credit. Should the medical leave or the time required to complete necessary work extend beyond the school year, arrangements can be made to complete work over the summer. In general, a student may also be asked to withdraw from the school if a medical leave will extend for more than four weeks.

## **Medications at School**

All prescription or over-the-counter medications for students must be provided to the Main Office and administered under the supervision of the Main Office or a designated member of the faculty or staff.

The Main Office is responsible for storing and dispensing all prescription and over-the-counter medications for students.

Prescription medication will not be administered without appropriate written, signed doctor's orders, and written parental permission. Over-the-counter medication will not be dispensed without clear written instructions and permission from the parent (as indicated on the medical information form, completed by parents as part of the back-to-school process). All prescriptions MUST be accompanied by written doctor's orders. Any changes in prescriptions (including dosage change) will require new orders. All medications must be provided in the original packaging with physician's orders and directions for storage clearly visible.

Heronfield Academy expects that students who need to take such medication at school will be responsible in obtaining the medication from the Main Office or designated faculty or staff member, as well as taking the medication as directed by a physician. Students are expected to come to the Main Office at the designated time, to establish a regular routine with the staff, and to follow through consistently with picking up medications.

A student will be permitted to keep emergency medications (such as inhalers or EpiPens) in their possession, provided written permission is provided by the family and by the family physician. Any changes to this authorization, such as a change in dosage or a discontinuation, should be shared with the school.

No medications other than emergency medications noted above for which special permission has been obtained are to be kept by a student. A student possessing medication in any amount without special permission or sharing medication with another student is a violation of school rules.

### **Health Records**

As a condition of enrollment, all families must provide updated health information about their Heronfield student before the start of the school year, and it is expected that parents will provide updates to the Main Office and to the student's advisor if there are any changes in the students physical or mental health that may affect the school day and the learning experience. Examples of topics that might warrant such an update include, but are not limited to, a recent vision exam, a decision to seek counseling of any sort, a physician's recommendation about athletic activity, or a change in medication.

### **Immunizations and Communicable Illnesses**

Heronfield places a premium on the health and welfare of the community. When students are not immunized, the school is placed in the difficult position to protect the children and adults in the community against illness while respecting parents who file a formal religious or medical exemption for their minor children.

Heronfield's immunization policy follows the laws of the State of New Hampshire, which requires that all students receive those vaccinations that are mandated by the state and provide their child's immunization records to the school. A family who chooses to not have their child vaccinated on religious or medical grounds will need to provide official documentation to the school.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the school has relied on expertise from public health and infectious disease experts as it implemented health and safety protocols. Consistent with that approach, the school strongly recommends that our age-eligible students be vaccinated against Covid-19. If and when New Hampshire mandates the Covid-19 vaccine for school-age children, we will be following state law and also requiring vaccination of our students, subject to the medical and religious exemptions recognized by our state. The school will not accept a religious exemption for the Covid-19 vaccine (only) if families are complying with other state immunization requirements.

In support of recommending that students be vaccinated, we offer the following:

- A fully vaccinated student population is the best way to protect the health of students, employees, and the broader community against Covid-19 infection.
- Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention emphasizes that vaccinations against the coronavirus are safe and effective and protect against current variants. Vaccines are now widely available.
- People who are fully vaccinated are less likely to transmit infection to others.
- This public health approach is consistent with longstanding efforts across the United States to protect students of all ages from a wide range of serious and contagious diseases.

In order to gauge how many students will be vaccinated, we may ask families to complete a questionnaire and update the student's vaccine status if it changes. This information will be maintained confidentially, and will only be used to help us to determine what safeguards we have in place and otherwise to update policies throughout the school year. Depending on the vaccine census in the school community, we may therefore require periodic Covid-19 testing, mask wearing, and other public health measures recommended by public health and education agencies as situations change.

Students who are exempt from the state's immunization requirements may be prohibited from attending school and participating in school activities in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. Students excluded from the school for this reason will not be permitted to return until (1) the danger of the outbreak has passed; (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers; or (3) the student is immunized. In determining whether there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School may consult with

appropriate medical professionals and/or the New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions**

Food allergies can present significant challenges for families and their students, and yet as students grow into their adolescent years, it is important for the student and the family to play the primary role in ensuring that the student's food is safe by providing appropriate and healthy choices as they pack lunch and snack each day. Heronfield is not an 'allergen-free' school and does not restrict what students may bring to school for lunch and snack, but as dietary needs and allergies can vary from one student to the next, students should not share snack or lunch food with classmates.

From time to time, Heronfield will provide special snacks or lunches to the teachers and students, and the school will always provide gluten-free, nut-free, vegetarian and vegan options to those students who require them.

### **Emergencies**

If a true emergency arises, families should know that the faculty and staff will seek immediate care for any member of the community, which may include calling paramedics and other emergency services for treatment. Every effort will be made to contact parents and caregivers, including any emergency contacts that have been provided. In all cases, the school and its employees will make the best possible decisions in the interest of the student's health and in consultation with physicians until parents or caregivers have been contacted.

### **Health & Wellness Classes**

Students in all grades will have a one-semester Health & Wellness class. The class will meet once per week for approximately 18 weeks, and the focus will be on in-class lessons and conversations in each

session, with minimal homework and assessments. The lessons will cover a range of topics, which may include nutrition, sleep, drug and alcohol awareness, healthy relationships, digital citizenship, and mental health.

## **Section X: Student Support**

### **Academic Help and Tutoring**

Heronfield's teachers are committed to each student's growth and success in all parts of their experience at Heronfield. As students and their families recognize that additional academic support is needed, they should know that there are a variety of options. Students can arrange to meet with a teacher at a mutually convenient time, whether before or after school or during a break, and this might occur occasionally or on a weekly basis. Some teachers will also host group review sessions during the lunch period or after school, either regularly or before upcoming assessments.

Heronfield offers additional support to students on topics ranging from organization to homework completion, and the quiet spaces can be provided to take assessments and to make up any work missed during absences.

In addition, sixth grade students will begin the school year with a weekly Study Skills class to provide further support on managing one's schedule and materials, as well as insights into how to take notes, prepare for assessments, and complete big projects on schedule.

While Heronfield's teachers take great pride in their dedicated work with students, there may be times when a family wishes to enlist a tutor for additional academic support. Heronfield's teachers may not tutor students in their classes for pay during the same school year, but they can be contacted about tutoring students that they do not teach. As needed, the school may be able to provide names of potential tutors in the local area.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Members of the school community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. If sensitive information about a student has to be shared, it will be done on a need-to-know basis and in compliance with applicable law. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parents/guardians and others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about an individual's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the School environment, or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

## **Section XI: Parents as Partners**

### **Parental Comportment and Support for School Policies**

As parents sign the enrollment contract to secure their child's place at Heronfield Academy for the upcoming year, they are also affirming their belief in the school, its mission and philosophy. Just as students are asked to represent themselves well at school and to represent the school well when they are in the wider community, so too it is expected that parents will largely support the school and its work in as many ways as possible. This begins with supporting their child's experience and extends through adhering to both the letter and spirit of many of the policies outlined in this handbook. The support of the Heronfield parent community has been a driving force for the school since it was founded, and this



ongoing belief and trust will continue to be a crucial element in the school's future.

Even so, questions and differences of opinion may arise from time to time, and parents should be sure to contact their child's advisor or teacher, the Main Office, or the Head of School to ensure that their voices are heard and that topics are addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner. The school will always seek a positive resolution to matters that may arise, and all parties will contribute to shared solutions in assuming goodwill and placing the student and their growth at the center of each conversation.

**Parent Partnership**

Heronfield's parents have supported the school in myriad ways since its founding, whether in organizing events, helping with campus cleanup, or spearheading fundraising efforts. This past year was highlighted by the emergence of the Heronfield Family Connections program, which included the establishment of grade liaisons to help promote better communication, greater family involvement, and opportunities to take part in the program and to support the school through a variety of activities throughout the school year.

**The Heronfield Fund and other Fundraising Efforts**

The Heronfield Fund represents the school's major fundraising drive in each academic year and helps support aspects of the Heronfield experience program that may not be fully covered by tuition, such as field trips, guest speakers, classroom resources, and faculty professional development. The fund kicks off in October of each year and appeals to current families, grandparents, alumni, alumni parents, and other long-time supporters of the community. The Heronfield Fund remains open through the end of June, though the majority of gifts are made in the fall and just before the end of the calendar year.

Each spring, the school hosts a Spring Fundraiser to further garner community support, often focused on a core opportunity to help move the school forward. This festive gathering includes a live and silent auction, raffles and much more. Planning for the spring event begins in the winter months, and there is always an array of volunteer possibilities for parents in the community.

**Section XII: Financial Information**

**Enrollment Contracts**

The enrollment contract provided to many students and families at the conclusion of the admissions process demonstrates the school's belief that the student will both benefit from and contribute to the Heronfield community. As long as the student remains in good academic, behavioral, and social standing, the family can expect that enrollment contracts will be reissued for successive years.

In signing the contract and enrolling their child at Heronfield, the family also pledges to support the school, its mission, and its program, and also agrees to pay the annual tuition and ancillary expenses such as for books and school supplies, for athletic participation, and for any private music lessons and after school activities, as requested. If a family consistently demonstrates opposition to the school and its operations, or does not pay the required tuition, the school and its leadership may choose to temporarily or permanently withhold an enrollment contract for the following school year.

**Tuition and Tuition Assistance**

Tuition for the 2024-2025 school year at Heronfield Academy is \$28,720. While tuition supports the basic operations of the school, annual fundraising supplements tuition income and further enhances the teaching and learning experience.

Heronfield is committed to meeting the demonstrated financial need of as many families as possible, and families who would benefit from such tuition assistance are encouraged to take part in this consideration. The process is outlined on the school's website, and families should keep in mind that all materials are due by January 30, 2025.

A family who receives tuition assistance one year can largely anticipate that similar support will be provided in successive years, as long as the family's financial situation remains relatively the same, but adjustment can occur in either direction according to the information at hand. Families who receive tuition assistance must resubmit all financial information each year in order to be part of this process, and families who have not previously requested consideration may engage in a later year.

### **Tuition Billing Schedule**

Heronfield offers its families three payment plans for school tuition:

- Payment in full due no later than July 1 of each year;
- Two payments, with half due on July 1, 2024, and the second half due on October 1;
- Or ten payments over a period starting in July and ending in April, offered by FACTS Tuition Management. Families must register for this plan, and further information can be provided by the business office.

### **Billing**

Families will be billed for ancillary expenses, such as athletic fees and music lessons.

## **Appendix A: Student Dress Guidelines**

As a community, we believe all members of the Heronfield Academy community should dress in a way that reflects the importance of our common work of teaching and learning. *Our student dress guidelines are intended to support equal access to education for all of our students, and to uphold our school's Core Values and to honor our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.*

The goal of the Heronfield Academy Dress Guidelines is to create an atmosphere that is comfortable and that supports play, movement and a safe learning environment. Additionally, students should be able to dress comfortably and in clothes conducive for learning without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline or body shaming.

### **A Shared Community Effort**

The primary responsibility for a student's attire rests with the student and their family, and together they must ensure that the student's attire is suitable for all aspects of the school day and any school-sponsored activities. For special occasions, such as ceremonies or field trips, students and families may be advised of specific dress recommendations.

The school is responsible for ensuring that student attire does not interfere with or affect the participation in any activity or affect the student's health or safety.

The entire Heronfield community of teachers, staff, students, and parents will need to work together to ensure that the dress guidelines are upheld effectively and equitably.

Our Guiding Principles: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times, and clothing must be functional for all aspects of the students' school day

All students must wear:

- A top with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms, and a finished neckline →
- Bottoms that extend to approximately fingertip length or beyond
- Closed-toed shoes that provide adequate protection (such as in science class) and allow for full participation (as in PE class)

All students may wear:

- Jeans, khakis, skirts, skorts, shorts, dress pants, opaque leggings, yoga pants, and other athletic-style shorts and pants
- Sweaters, turtlenecks, blouses, collared shirts, sleeveless tops, jerseys, and t-shirts with neutral to positive messaging
- Heronfield-branded clothing, of course!

Students may not wear:

- Hats, hoods or sunglasses while indoors
- Shorts, or skirts without tights or leggings, between Thanksgiving Break and Spring Break → Shirts with overly large armholes or with spaghetti straps, or strapless tops → Shirts that are cut or designed to show one's abdomen in normal standing position → Any clothing item that reveals undergarments (excluding visible straps) → Any item that obscures the face, eyes or ears (except for religious or medical reasons) → Any clothing item with language or images that support or suggest violence, alcohol or drug use, profanity, vulgarity, or hate speech.

### **Assembly Dress**

While students should dress for comfort and personal expression most days, there are a number of dates throughout the year when it is important for community members to reflect the importance of the occasion through their choice of clothes. Such days include Grandparents & Special Friends Day, Festival of Light, Last Sanctuary, as well as field trips to museums and other similar venues. A list of all anticipated Assembly Dress days will be provided early in the school year.

Assembly Dress choices may include nice pants (jeans without rips or tears are acceptable, sweatpants or flannel pants are not), polo or button down shirts, blouses, sweaters or solid fleeces, dresses or skirts.

Inspired by the *Model Student Dress Code* by Oregon NOW (National Organization for Women) in February, 2016. Adapted for the 2021-2022 academic year by a Heronfield Academy faculty and student committee in May, 2021.

## **Appendix B: Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Bullying, and Reporting Requirements**

### **Harassment**

Heronfield Academy expressly prohibits any form of harassment including that based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, or physical or mental disability.

It is the policy of Heronfield Academy to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. Heronfield Academy will not tolerate harassment of any kind, whether it is of a general or sexual nature, or whether it is based on specific characteristics.

The Academy will not tolerate sexual or other harassment of employees or students by anyone, whether on Academy property, at school or work-related assignments, off Academy property, or at Academy-sponsored social functions or activities. Where inappropriate conduct is found, Heronfield Academy will act promptly to eliminate the harassing conduct and take other appropriate corrective action, including separating an individual from the Academy.

Any form of harassment, including written or verbal harassment in the form of voice mail, electronic messaging systems, electronic mail, or use of the Academy's internet or intranet sites will not be tolerated. Harassment may include easily identifiable acts of verbal, written, or physical abuse. It may also include more subtle, but equally damaging forms of harassment such as graffiti, epithets, and remarks or "humor" that stereotype individuals. No matter what form it takes, harassment of any member of this community is strictly prohibited.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student of Heronfield Academy to harass another student, or employee, or other visitors or members of Heronfield Academy community through conduct or communications of a harassing or sexual nature as further defined in this policy. Violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the Academy.

Any form of retaliation directed toward someone making a complaint about harassment or for participating in a harassment investigation is also prohibited.

### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment refers to unreasonable conduct or behavior which is personally offensive or threatening, impairs morale, or interferes with the work effectiveness of employees or students. Examples of harassment include conduct or comments that threaten physical violence; offensive, unsolicited remarks; unwelcome gestures or physical contact; display or circulation of written materials, items, or pictures degrading to any gender, racial, ethnic, religious, age, handicap, or other group listed above; and verbal abuse or insults about or directed at any employee or student, or group of employees or students because of their relationship in any of the groups listed above.

Any of the following acts may be viewed as harassment:

- Conduct or comments that threaten physical violence.
- Offensive, unsolicited comments.
- Unwelcome gestures or physical contact.
- Threatening phone calls or text messages
- Display or circulation of degrading printed materials or pictures.
- Any action that is threatening or implies a threat.

### **What is Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment may be described as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical and expressive behavior of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the individual;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning employment or educational environment
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's

perceived acceptance in the school community.

Some examples of sexual harassment are:

- Physical assault, including rape or any coerced or non-consensual sexual relations
- Sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not
- Sexual physical contact
- Sexual or lewd jokes, remarks, leering, whistling, brushing against the body, or other suggestive or insulting gestures or comments
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences or activities or discussion of one's own sexual experiences or activities
- Intimidating or suggestive remarks about an individual's sexual orientation, whether actual or implied
- Sexually suggestive or degrading sounds or remarks (written, oral, or electronically transmitted), including graffiti and the spreading of sexual rumors, made to or about another member of the community
  - The use of technology to transmit sexually suggestive, offensive, and/or degrading material, whether received at the school or elsewhere
- The open display of sexually offensive objects, pictures, messages

The list is not exhaustive, and members of the community should seek advice and assistance in any circumstance in which they are made to feel uncomfortable by the behaviors of another. Each student should exercise his or her own good judgment to avoid engaging in conduct that may be perceived by others as harassment.

Harassment can come from superiors, school employees, fellow students, visitors, or vendors. Men as well as women, and boys as well as girls, can be victims of sexual harassment. Heronfield Academy will not tolerate any form of illegal discrimination or harassment. Violations of this policy, whether intended or not, will not be permitted.

### **Legal Definitions and School Policies**

In accordance with the school's mission, values, and standards of conduct, the school has supplemented certain definitions and concepts provided by law in an effort to articulate the school's philosophy toward addressing disrespectful and harmful misconduct. In essence, the school's standards may be stricter than the law and the school may impose discipline accordingly. The school's efforts to enhance its protection of students in no way expands an individual's rights under the law.

### **Harassment and Complaint Procedure**

A student who feels that he or she is a victim of harassment or has been treated discriminatory manner, should promptly report the incident to their advisor or the Head of School.

The school will do everything in its power to respect the confidentiality of the complaint without jeopardizing a complete investigation of the situation and to implement corrective action to end the harassment and prevent its recurrence.

If, after investigating a complaint of harassment or discrimination, Heronfield determines that the complaint is not bona fide or that an employee or student has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or gave the false information.

### **Reporting Complaints**

With respect to reporting sexual assault in particular, students are strongly urged to speak to a trusted adult on campus or at home, to a nurse in the Health Center. When making such outreach, students may share as little or as much information as they would like.

A parent or guardian who believes that his or her child is the target of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment, or whose child has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about such conduct, is urged to notify the Head of School or appropriate dean immediately. Furthermore, any parent or guardian who has directly witnessed bullying, discrimination, hazing, sexual harassment or sexual assault, or has relevant information concerning such an incident or any incident of retaliation, is strongly encouraged to contact one of these administrators.

The School urges students and parents/guardians not to make anonymous reports. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously, and disciplinary action will generally not be taken against an individual solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The school cannot promise absolute confidentiality to those reporting bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment, as there may be a need to share information during an investigation or otherwise; however, the school will disclose such information with discretion, on a need-to-know basis.

### **Investigation Process**

After a complaint has been brought to the attention of the school, an impartial, fact-finding investigation of the complaint is conducted by the Head of School or designee. This investigation may include (but is not necessarily limited to) interviews with the complainant, alleged target, witnesses to the incident, the person or persons against whom the complaint was made, and any other parties who witnessed or may otherwise have information relevant to the alleged incident. The investigator(s) may consult with teachers, Health Center staff, the parents/guardians of the student or students who were allegedly targeted, and/or the parents/guardians of the student or students alleged to have been the aggressors, or any other person whom the investigator(s) deem to have knowledge about, or circumstances surrounding, the complaint.

The school, in its sole discretion, may also deem it appropriate to use external investigators to review a complaint. In certain circumstances, the school may be obligated to report misconduct to external authorities, such as to law enforcement or the local child welfare agency. The school cooperates with external agencies and may postpone its own investigation into misconduct as appropriate.

The school neither tolerates nor engages in retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint about interpersonal misconduct, or for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. Retaliation of any sort will not be tolerated. No adverse action will be taken against a student for making a good faith report of alleged bullying, discrimination, hazing, sexual harassment or sexual assault. An individual who is found to have engaged in retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, or participating in the investigation of a complaint, may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **False Complaints**

All persons involved in an investigation should understand that false or exaggerated accusations can be extremely damaging to innocent persons; therefore, the School expects and requires the honest and full disclosure of facts by all involved. Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports

misconduct. Retaliation may include behaviors such as being ostracized, having rumors or misinformation spread about the reporter, or the reporter being given extra cleaning or other onerous student life assignments, within the purview of student leaders to assign. Anyone who retaliates against a complaint of harassment, bullying, hazing, or other serious misconduct is also in violation of school policy. A student may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the original complaint turns out to be true or the retaliation was not intended to be harmful (“it was just a joke”). Each retaliatory offense will be investigated and sanctioned separately. Individuals who themselves are not complainants, but who participate in an investigation, for example, as witnesses, will also be protected from retaliation under this policy.

### **Reporting Requirements: Responsibilities to Our Students**

At Heronfield Academy, the emotional and physical safety of our students is one of our utmost priorities. We strive to teach by what we do, how we do it, and by what we say. We also comply with all applicable New Hampshire reporting laws such as those relating to reporting of crimes, hazing, abuse, and neglect. The following policies describe some special responsibilities we have towards the students in our care.

### **Child and Sexual Abuse Reporting (RSA 169-C)**

Heronfield Academy employees are required under New Hampshire law to report any case of suspected abuse or neglect to the Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Any employee with any knowledge whatsoever of suspected abuse or neglect is required to report it immediately to the Head of School or his or her designee so that appropriate reporting and necessary responsive actions can be taken.

“Abuse” is defined to include sexual abuse, intentional physical injury, psychological injury and the exhibiting of emotional symptoms resulting from consistent mistreatment or neglect, or physical injury caused by non-accidental means.

“Neglect” includes abandonment (without proper parental care, control, subsistence, education, etc. necessary for physical or emotional health when health has or is likely to suffer serious impairment) and deprivation not primarily due to parent's lack of financial means.

“Sexual abuse” includes activities indicating a student's health or welfare is harmed or threatened, such as by the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any student at any point in their lives to engage in any explicit sexual conduct or any simulation, for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other sexual exploitation or incest.

Please note that the threshold for reporting abuse and neglect is triggered by having merely ‘reason to suspect.’ Failure to report is a misdemeanor, but good faith reports are protected under the law. Please contact the Head of School if you have any questions about Child Abuse reporting requirements. The Head of School must be involved in such reporting.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined in full in the main section of this Handbook. Any student or parent who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subjected to bullying, including insults, taunts, or challenges, should promptly report this behavior to a faculty member AND the Head of School.

The Head of School shall investigate alleged acts of bullying and may take disciplinary action as he/she deems appropriate including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, in-school suspension,

out-of-school suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion in order to end bullying and prevent its recurrence.

Although New Hampshire's bullying law, RSA 193-F, applies only to public schools, Heronfield Academy believes that prevention of bullying will benefit the wider community and hereby adopts this policy even though it is not mandated by law to do so.

### **Safe School Zone Law (RSA 193-D)**

Heronfield Academy aspires to fully comply with the reporting requirements of the New Hampshire Safe School Zone Law (RSA 193-D). All Heronfield employees, whether full or part time, who have witnessed or who have information from the victim of an act of "theft, destruction or violence" on school property, including buses, must report that information to the Head of School immediately. Similarly, any student or parent that observes such acts should report the same to a school official immediately.

The Head of School is required to make a report of the incident immediately to the Hampton Falls Police Department and then to follow up with a written report within 48 hours, unless otherwise instructed by the police.

### **Notice to Law Enforcement of Student Conduct**

The school will inform the appropriate law enforcement agency of student acts of theft, destruction, and violence as required by law (Safe School Zone law (RSA § 193-D:1), or as otherwise deemed appropriate, including conduct involving assault, sexual assault, unlawful possession or distribution of controlled drugs or alcohol, and unlawful possession of a firearm, or other dangerous weapon.

Students are also advised that Federal and State of New Hampshire laws provide for the imposition of substantial penalties for those convicted of certain conduct, including in some instances mandatory revocation of driver's licenses, mandatory minimum fines, and even mandatory minimum periods of incarceration where certain conduct (such as distribution of a controlled drug) occurs in the area of a school.

The school is covered by the New Hampshire Drug Free School Zone law (RSA § 193-B). Under the Drug Free School Zone law, a drug-free school zone is broader than just the school grounds and includes any property used for school purposes by the school, whether

or not owned by the school, areas within 1,000 feet of any such property, and areas within and immediately adjacent to School buses. Likewise, under the Safe School Zone law, a safe school zone includes school property and School buses as well as any property, public or private, at which a school-sponsored or School-related event occurs.

New Hampshire law also prohibits any person under the age of twenty-one from purchasing or possessing any liquor or alcoholic beverage. New Hampshire law prohibits anyone under the age of twenty-one from being intoxicated by the consumption of an alcoholic beverage and defines intoxication, for those under twenty-one, to be an alcohol concentration of .02 or more.

Under the terms of the Safe School Zone law, any School employee who has witnessed or who has information from the victim of an act of theft, destruction, or violence in a safe school zone must report it in writing immediately to their supervisor. A supervisor must then report the incident to the Head of School, who is required by law to immediately report it to the local police. In addition, if the alleged victim is a student, the Head of School must immediately notify the person responsible for the victim's welfare that a report was made to the local law



enforcement authority. In some cases, a report to the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services is also required. A “safe school zone” is an area inclusive of any school property or school buses.

The definition of an “act of theft, destruction or violence” is broad and includes:

- Murder or Manslaughter
- First or second degree assault
- Aggravated Felonious Sexual Assault, Felonious Sexual Assault, or Sexual Assault • Kidnapping
- Endangering the Welfare of A Child
- Indecent Exposure and Lewdness for the purpose of sexual gratification or arousal • Prostitution and Related Offenses
- Possession, Distribution or Manufacture of Child Sexual Abuse Images • Computer Pornography
- Prohibited Uses of Computer Services related to online solicitation or enticement of a child
- Obscene Matter offenses related to a child
- Criminal mischief
- Unlawful possession or sale of a firearm or other dangerous weapon
- Arson
- Burglary
- Robbery
- Theft (any theft in excess of \$500 will be reported to the police)
- Illegal possession or sale of a controlled drug

Knowing failure to report as required under the Safe School Zone Law is a violation.

Under the terms of the law, when the School makes a report, we must provide the date and time of the incident, name(s) of the individual(s) involved, names and addresses of witnesses, and actions taken by the School. At Heronfield, these reports are normally made by the Head of School. Once the report is made, the Police Department’s response will depend upon a number of factors, including but not limited to the age of the student(s) involved and the nature of the specific crime.

## **Appendix C: Responsible Use of School Technology Policy**

### **Responsible Use of Technology**

The school is fortunate to have excellent resources for communication and research. Students are expected to remember that the principal purpose of any exchange of information within this community is for educational purposes and that any communication made to or from the School, with or without School-controlled equipment, must be made in line with the School’s general standards of conduct.

Though it is not the school’s intention or capability to monitor any use of technology outside of its own network, students should understand that whether physically on campus or off campus, whether during the school day or at night, on vacation or at any other time while enrolled at the School, whether linked to the School’s network from in school or from a remote location or not at all, or using their own personal computer or communication device on or off campus, students are expected to comply with this Responsible Use Policy and any applicable policies and procedures as long as they are enrolled at the School, as set forth in this Handbook and as further described below. Students are prohibited from engaging in cyber-bullying or any form of harassment using technology that may negatively impact a

member of our school community.

The School has explicit guidelines for using computers and other electronic devices, both on and off campus, using the School's network, and accessing the Internet. The School may monitor the activity and contents (including e-mail) of computers on campus and/or connected to the School's network, to ensure student safety and that the guidelines are being followed.

The School expects students and parents to adhere to the following guidelines. The examples below are just examples and are not an all-inclusive list of requirements and possibilities.

Students may:

- use technology for School work or class projects and assignments, at the teacher's discretion;
- access the Internet with teacher permission to enrich learning related to School work; and
- use technology in ways directed by the teacher.

Students may not:

- post personal contact information about themselves or other people;
- access or try to access network resources not intended for them;
- share their passwords with anyone;
- alter electronic communications to hide their identity or impersonate another person;
- communicate with or make plans to meet in person a stranger whom the student has contacted on-line;
- use inappropriate language or images in email, web pages, videos, or social networking sites;
- be disrespectful by talking or posting derogatory material (images, video, etc.) via email, social networking sites, live chat, web page, or any other method; ● engage in cyber-bullying, harassment or sexting, in violation of the School's anti-bullying policy and related policies as stated in this Handbook;
- access inappropriate information on the Internet such as (but not restricted to) sites that bypass filtering, promote hate or violence, gaming, or sites with sexually explicit or graphic, pornographic, or obscene material;
- plagiarize printed or electronic information; students must follow all copyright, trademark, patent and other laws governing intellectual property;
- install or download software on to School computers from the Internet, home, or by any other means; they may not remove network cables, keyboards or any other components unless expressly permitted by the School;
- create or use a mobile hotspot on the School campus.
- remove any School-owned computer equipment from the School;
- store personal files on the network, except in their own network user account; any information that a student leaves on a School-owned device may be deleted at any time, with or without notice.
- carry cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices on their person; all such items must remain in backpacks and turned off;
- disclose confidential or proprietary information related to the School, make public remarks that defame or disparage the School, its employees, its students or its interests, or that recklessly disregard or distort the truth of the matters commented on;
- access, change, delete, read, or copy any file, program, or account that belongs to someone else without permission;
- use the network for illegal or commercial activities;
- intentionally vandalize, steal, or cause harm to any School-owned equipment; deliberately disrupt or attempt to disrupt the software or hardware of the School

network;or

- be “friends” with, or otherwise directly connected to, any School employee on any social networking site that is not used primarily for educational purposes. If a student is contacted by a School employee via non-School channels for non-educational purposes, the student should immediately notify their advisor or another trusted adult.

Students should understand that:

- the use of inappropriate language, harassment, and disrespectful comments in email, texting or a chat room, or on a website or social networking site from either inside or outside the School, and whether during the school day, after hours, or during vacation time, as long as a student is enrolled at the School, may result in disciplinary action;
- there is no guarantee of privacy associated with their use of the School’s technology resources. Students should not expect that email, voice mail or other information created or maintained on the School’s network or School-issued devices (even those marked “personal” or “confidential”) will be private, confidential or secure. The School has the right to access and monitor both student-owned and School-owned computers and communication devices connected to the School’s network. By accessing the School’s system, each student has consented to the School’s right to view and/or monitor the School’s network and all of its associated accounts;
- they will be held accountable for unattended accounts, and for use of their computer or communication device, if such equipment is left unattended and/or used by another individual; and
- students should understand that students are responsible for following these rules. If a student does not follow these rules, and if use of technology on or off-campus negatively impacts the educational experience of a student enrolled at the School, the student may lose computer privileges and may face disciplinary action.

Parents should understand that:

- it is the responsibility of all parents to read this policy and discuss it with the student; ● teachers and administrators will strive to help students understand this policy at a level that is appropriate to their age and maturity; and
- if a student willfully damages the hardware or software of any School-owned technology, the parent will be responsible for paying for the repair or replacement of that technology.

The School may:

- access, view, monitor and track any information or communication stored on or transmitted over the School’s network, on or over equipment that has been used to access the School's network, or School-issued devices, and under certain circumstances, it may be required by law to allow third parties to do so. In addition, others may inadvertently view messages or data as a result of routine systems maintenance, monitoring or mis-delivery; and
- restrict the material accessed and not permit computers to be used for commercial purposes or for accessing inappropriate sites.

## **Security**

Security on any computer network is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If a student feels that he or she can identify a security problem on the Internet, the student must notify a system administrator. Students should not demonstrate the problem to other users. Attempts to log on to the Internet as anyone but the student himself or herself may result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the School’s network.

## **Vandalism**

Vandalism may result in cancellation of privileges and may result in disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet, or other devices or networks. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, attempts at gaining unauthorized access, changing hardware or software settings, or changing online materials without permission.

### **Reporting Violations**

Students are expected to assist in the enforcement of this policy. If a student suspects a violation of this policy, or if a student feels nervous or uncomfortable about another school community member's use of technology, the student should immediately report his or her suspicions, feelings and observations to their advisor or another trusted adult.

### **Sanctions And Discipline**

Students found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline including, but not limited to, the loss of computer privileges, probation, and dismissal from the School. Some violations may constitute criminal offenses as defined by local, state and federal laws, and the School may initiate or assist in the prosecution of any such violations to the fullest extent of the law.

### **Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Guidelines for Safe and Appropriate Electronic Communication with Students**

Consistent with the school's commitment to student safety and well-being, we expect all employees to act as role models: to maintain healthy, respectful boundaries in relationships with both students and adults; to communicate in a professional, respectful and courteous manner; and to relay community concerns to appropriate people at the school.

Electronic communication—including texting, Twitter, and messaging apps—has many practical advantages, but by its nature, invites peer to peer like exchanges and can create conditions where boundaries between school professionals and students become blurred. “It is important that school professionals stay in their professional roles (teacher, advisor, coach, administrator, etc.) when interacting with students. Assuming more personal roles, such as behaving as a student’s peer, changes the nature of the relationship between adult and child and erodes important boundaries” (Wolowitz, 2018).

Typically, electronic communication (texting/messaging apps) between school employees and students may be used for school-related purposes, only at reasonable hours, and, then, only sparingly. Some examples of appropriate use of electronic communication with students include sending a group text to a team/class, confirming the time of an event, where to meet, what to wear, weather concerns, etc.. Some examples of inappropriate use might include late night texts, conversational texts, exchanging personal information, jokes, emojis, etc.. Employees may text students in an emergency if other means of communication are not successful.

During periods of remote instruction, all of our communication with students moves to electronic platforms, and may regularly include 1:1 electronic communication between teachers, advisors, college counselors, learning support, coaches, and students. We recognize that students are often informal when they communicate electronically, given that it is primarily used to connect with their peers or family members. While our students use email and, occasionally, text messages to communicate about School matters with their teachers, advisors, and coaches, they are not accustomed to interacting with their teachers online and electronically to this extent, through video, phone, Google meet, docs, Zoom, etc. Teachers are not accustomed to it either. Colleagues are reminded to stay alert regarding professional boundaries and stay in their role as educators, while they monitor the well-being of our students, particularly through periods of remote instruction when so many of our students may be isolated and under stress (Wolowitz, 2020). This includes keeping an eye on teachers’ own physical location while

they are communicating with video (from where in your home, what can be seen behind you, etc.). Our educators are reminded to set physical boundaries when communicating with students via video from their homes.

If an employee receives a communication from a student that is worrisome in any way and/or creates concern (e.g. a student in distress), the employee should relay the concern to the appropriate person at school, which may be the advisor, grade head, school counselor, or Head of School. All employees are expected to report any concerns about inappropriate texting or electronic communication between adults and students.