

Rock Point School Parent Handbook 2024-25

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Changes to Handbook, 2024-25

None

Communication

Parent to School

You can communicate with all the various people at school in a number of ways.

TELEPHONE

The school telephone numbers are listed on the school calendar which you can find in the [Family Paperwork and Info Hub](#).

OFFICE (802) 863-1104

Mary Hamilton is the Office and Systems Manager. In general, you can reach her from 9:00 AM through 12:45 and then again from 1:30 PM through 5:00 PM. If your student has a cell phone, it is often handed out by 5:00 pm unless they have pending restrictions. It is often more difficult to get through to the office phone during the evening since we do not have a person whose job it is to keep the office open during that time. It might be helpful to get a sense of different staff members' schedules to figure out the optimum time for calling them.

EMAIL

As everyone who exists in this computer centric world knows, emails pile up quickly. ***When you are emailing a staff member, please pause and think about who is the best person/people to attend to your needs.*** We will answer your email within 24-36 hours (typically sooner) during the week and on Monday for weekend mail. Following are some guidelines for who does what:

- Mary mhamilton@rockpoint.org
 - All manners of paperwork questions
 - Tuition
 - Private Student Account (allowances)
 - Vacation travel scheduling
 - Parent Conference questions
 - Student pictures/IDs

- Updates on therapy schedules
- Relay a message to your child
- Grade and progress report questions
- Gateway to other staff when you're not sure who to talk with
- Ryan rweiland@rockpoint.org
 - Overall program questions
 - Setting up a therapist and appointments
 - Behavioral challenges
 - Homesick student
 - Student to student relationship challenges
 - Drug or alcohol use concerns
 - Mental Health concerns
- Abbey abaker@rockpoint.org
 - Academic concerns
 - College counseling
 - Transcript questions
- Hillary hkramer@rockpoint.org
 - Financial Aid questions
- Meg mmartin@rockpoint.org
 - Medication changes and concerns
 - Prescription needs
 - Health concerns
 - Drug testing
- Gibson gsmith@rockpoint.org
 - Tuition billing/payment issues
- C.J. cspirito@rockpoint.org
 - You have tried the above avenues and *have not rec'd an answer to your satisfaction*
 - Development: you are interested in how you can help the school, either financially or otherwise
 - Questions about how the Board of Trustees govern
 - Anything Baseball related
- Teachers
 - English: Douh: dhimes@rockpoint.org,
 - History: Mark, mspigos@rockpoint.org
 - Math: Leda, lsommerville@rockpoint.org
 - Science: Mari, mdalton@rockpoint.org
 - Art: Jeannie, jwaltz@rockpoint.org
 - Academic questions related to their area of expertise
 - General classroom questions

- Residential Educators
 - All things dorm life related
 - Res. Eds. work from 3:30 pm -10:30 pm and are very busy working and playing with your students during those times. Please give time for them to respond to emails, often the next day.
 - Second floor
 - Stan Eddy: seddy@rockpoint.org
 - Simone Aliya: jpfeil@rockpoint.org
 - Third Floor
 - Emma Cowper: ecowper@rockpoint.org
 - Lucia Liencres: llienres@rockpoint.org
 - Off-campus
 - Sloan Collins: scollins@rockpoint.org
- Advisors
 - Anything you would like them to know about how you perceive your student is doing
 - Anything you would like them to pass on to the rest of the staff about how your student is doing
- Charles - Director of Food Services
 - Diet related questions/concerns

FAX

(802) 863-6628

Faxes are most likely to be seen during regular business hours.

STUDENT EMAILS

The school provides e-mail addresses for students (i.e. luke@rockpoint.org) , and they have access to their own personal emails as well.

U.S. MAIL

Rock Point School 1 Rock Point Road Burlington, VT 05408-2735

Mail usually arrives in the forenoon and is distributed at lunchtime. Care packages are always welcome. We encourage students to write home and we provide the postage for letters to family members. Please refrain from sending your student energy drinks and/or large quantities of food. Students do not necessarily keep energy drinks to the morning hours and so can impact their rest at night and open food in dorm rooms can lead to pest issues.

CALLING HOME

When students have their cell phones, they use those to call home. There are also school phones for new students who do not have yet have access to their phones, students who do not have a phone or have lost access to their cell phones (due to a restriction).

Opportunities to Visit RPS

Parent Conferences

The purpose of the Parent Conferences is to invite you to join us at school and get a sense of the life and work of your student. There is time to visit with Teachers, Residential Educators and Support staff; time for you to get together with other parents to get to know one another and share how things are going. Of course, we also make sure you have time to enjoy your student as well.

Fall Conferences

We hope this weekend will serve many purposes:

- provide you with insight for you into your child's life here at Rock Point
- time for you to participate in, and bolster, the educational partnership we are forging with your child
- a chance for the adults at RPS to share information with you about your student
- a pleasant interlude in the Burlington area

Most of all, we hope that the parent visit will allow you to participate with your student in the special life of this school community.

While the details may change from year to year, what follows is a typical schedule. Be sure to look for announcements at the opening of the school year for particulars.

Fall Family Conferences Schedule

Thursday Evening

An informal reception for Parents at Head of School C.J. Spirito's home, located on the Rock Point School campus. This is a chance to meet and chat with other parents and help build this year's school community. Drinks and light fare are provided.

Friday

Friday will be devoted to parent/staff conferences, informational meetings, parent workshop, and common fun activities for parents, students and staff.

Saturday and Sunday

This is a time for parents to enjoy a weekend with their student. There are many activities and places to see around Burlington at this time of year, and please bear in mind that Vermont currently has the highest per capita local food consumption of any state, allowing for wonderful restaurant experiences as well.

Saturday morning we have the Ooky Spooky Race. This is a foot race open to our community and the public. It raises funds for CoTS (the Committee on Temporary Shelter). You are welcome to run in the race and we encourage whole families to run together.

Most families spend the weekend together away from school. The Residential Educators will offer activities at the school, in case people choose to spend time here.

If you have any questions about travel or accommodations in the Burlington area, please give Mary a call in the front office.

Winter Family Conference, Second Semester

This second semester Family Visit differs from the first semester as February Vacation begins on the Friday of the Parents' Visit. You will need to arrive on Wednesday to start conferences Thursday a.m. Friday you will pick up your student for vacation and the school dormitory will close that afternoon. You might want to schedule a skiing holiday here in New England or make plans to travel back home with your student on Friday afternoon.

Graduation

The last week of school generally follows a traditional pattern. The whole school turns out to clean the building from top to bottom, and then goes off to an end of year camping trip. The purpose of the trip is to have time to say good-bye and gently dismantle the community we have spent the whole year putting together.

On the Friday night before graduation, we hold the Night of Recognition. Beginning with shared food, families join the students and staff to honor the Senior class with an evening of awards, great food and a slide show.

On Saturday morning, the entire school community, all students, their families and friends, the staff and trustees of the school gather for the graduation ceremony, which begins at 10:00 AM. The Seniors file in with the Bishop and the Head of School. After a (very) brief welcome from the Head of School, we spend the next ninety minutes or so listening as, one by one, people in the audience stand to address the graduates. Towards the end of the time the graduates may have a little to say, too. Then the Bishop awards the seniors their diplomas and gives us their Blessing. Amidst high energy and happiness we gather on the front lawn for a picnic.

By 1:30 PM students and their families have begun loading their cars with what seems like enough stuff to outfit three or four rooms rather than that small space that was assigned in September and, before we know it, the afternoon and the school year are over.

Travel

Planning for Vacation Travel

We know it can be hard to schedule vacation to fit a precise schedule, but in the best of all possible worlds, this is how we would like holidays to work:

- Students should leave for vacation after lunch on the first day of the break, typically a Friday
- Students should return by 5:00 PM on the last day of the break, typically a Sunday
- Please plan to schedule travel early enough to follow these guidelines.
 - Exceptions may be made for these times due to extenuating circumstances by calling Mary in the front office who will present the need to the Dean or Head of School.
- Rock Point provides transportation to and from the bus station, airport, and train station on the travel days referenced above.
 - Students who return late or leave early (after being approved for these arrangements) must take a taxi, Uber, or Lyft between Rock Point and their transportation destination in Burlington.

Advising

Each student meets with his or her advisor for forty minutes each week. Together they discuss the student's goals and progress. Teachers and other adults use the advisor as a clearinghouse for specific comments about how a student is doing in school - praise as well as criticism. The advisor reflects this information back to the student and uses the information to guide the student during their time at RPS.

The advisor also works with Ryan Weiland (Dean of School) and Abbey Baker (Academic Guidance) to ensure that your student is making satisfactory progress towards having the proper number and type of credits to graduate on time. Your student's advisor will communicate with you once each week, after the advising meeting, to let you know how things are going. You can facilitate this aspect of our program by letting us know what your goals are for your student and telling us how things are going from your perspective.

School Nurse

Meg Martin, RN, our school nurse, is here part-time during the school day. An important focus of school nursing services is medication administration and monitoring of all prescription and over the counter medications (including vitamins and homeopathic remedies).

All medicines brought into the school must be kept in the health office. If your child requires medications such as Ritalin or Dexedrine, please remember that these are prescriptions that cannot be called into a pharmacy and they must be filled monthly. If your doctor is not in the Burlington area, please contact Meg to discuss how to make arrangements to ensure that the school will always have enough meds on hand for your child.

Other health services provided by the nurse include:

- the assessment and treatment of acute illnesses and injuries
- health counseling to students
- ongoing conferences with parents about the health needs of students
- participation in health education, in individual as well as classroom settings
- administration of drug screens
- assisting in coordination of appointments with community health care professionals
- immunization audits
- providing backup advice to the rest of the school staff.

Please read the letter on the following page from Ryan, which clarifies Meg's role – what the nurse is expected and not expected to do. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Ryan.

You can help Meg provide the best care for your student by scheduling regular health and dental appointments for times when your child is at home and can be seen by his or her regular provider. While Meg joins with Ryan and Mary in helping manage and facilitate counseling appointments for students while they are here at school, we recognize that no one on the Rock Point School staff can take your place as the primary contact person for health providers, counselors or therapists.

Letter re: Medical concerns

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we look to this new year, we want to make sure we have explained what supports we can offer your child and what the school cannot provide. There are ways that you can assist us, as well. We have tried to be thorough and think of a variety of medical scenarios. Of course, not all starred areas below are relevant for all students.

Vaccinations

Vermont law requires that all high school students be fully immunized against the following: diphtheria, pertussis tetanus (DPT, Tdap), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), and (for students living in campus-based housing) meningococcal vaccine. The *actual immunization dates* must be on the student's record. Each student must have had five doses of DPT or DTaP, plus a ten year tetanus booster, four doses of polio vaccine, two doses of MMR, three doses of hepatitis B, two doses of varicella vaccine, and if applicable, one dose of meningococcal vaccine. Students may be excluded from school for failure to comply with these state requirements, but parents who desire that exceptions be made for their child should contact the Head of School or the school nurse.

In addition, our expectation is that students are vaccinated/boostered against Covid-19. If you have questions about this, please contact Ryan Weiland, Dean of School.

Adjunct Care

If your child will be needing **dental, orthodontic, chiropractic, or any other longer-term care**, please arrange appointments during vacations or in the summer.

Annual Physicals

Each student must have an annual physical report within a year of the start of school. Please have your child seen by their home doctor for a physical and send in your completed health and release forms, and current immunization records before school starts.

Allergies

If your child has asthma or allergies, please obtain and comply with the School's policy and procedures related to life threatening allergies. This policy is available from the School Nurse. Please bring the appropriate **inhaler, nebulizer, epi pen**, etc. **We require 2 of each**: one for the student to have in his or her own possession (if appropriate) and one to be held in the health

office. As with all prescription medication given by Rock Point School, a doctor's order form needs to be completed with directions for frequency of administration, dosage required, and other relevant information. Also, please ensure that these medications are not out of date.

Psychiatry

Please continue working with your **home psychiatrist** during school breaks. Students have breaks just about every 6 weeks (except in the fall when we go just over 8 weeks).

If your child does not have a home psychiatrist, please enlist one before your child's first vacation from Rock Point School.

Medications

- if there have been any recent medication changes, your child must be **stabilized on that medication** before they arrive at school.
- please arrive at school with **at least 30 days worth of medication, in their original labeled containers.**
- Set up an account with our local Hannafords Pharmacy on North Ave in Burlington for refills: 802-862-7752

We hope this helps to clarify some of our expectations and available supports. Please call us, or Meg, with any questions or concerns you may have regarding this letter. Meg can also be reached at mmartin@rockpoint.org.

Best,

Ryan Weiland
Dean of School

Parental Involvement in School

There are many ways parents and family members and friends can be involved in the life of the school. We can always use help with the Prom, Fundraising, the Play and other events at the school.

For people who live too far away to come to the school to help, there are other ways to be supportive:

- Perhaps you would like to befriend a recent RPS graduate who is going to college in your area
- We look for families to help us with accommodations when we travel.

- You may want to help us by being a resource for parents who have just enrolled their student at Rock Point, or who are considering choosing RPS for their student.
- If entertaining appeals to you, perhaps you would consider hosting a small informational gathering for prospective parents in your area.
- The school always has a wish list of items and services we would like to have donated. Perhaps you can help us shorten the list.

You can also help by keeping communication with your student active... send letters, care packages, notes and clippings. Please keep in mind that we pay for the postage any time your student writes home or to friends. We encourage writing letters home and we know how happy students are to receive mail from home.

Send your child's favorite recipes from home to Charles, the School Chef. He will be happy to try to provide some fun and comfort from the home kitchen.

Please do not allow this list to limit your connections with the school. Each year we learn new ways in which parents can connect with the school. We will be happy to hear your ideas.

Academics

IEP or 504 Plan

Your child's plan that was made at another school is not implemented by Rock Point School. An IEP is a legal document between parents and public school systems. Please note: as a private school that is not approved to provide special education, Rock Point School does not implement IEPs. It remains the public school's responsibility to implement the IEP.

If your child has a current educational evaluation, RPS will make an Individual Student Plan (ISP) for your child that will contain the following information:

- An overview of the student's school history and learning needs
- An overview of the student's strengths
- A list of academic goals that we have for the student in a given school year
- A list of strategies and accommodations we will use to help the student meet the goals.

RPS will use any previous or existing school plan from another school as an important source of information, along with educational testing and any other materials provided, to help us learn what has been helpful to the student in the past and what might be helpful to the student currently. So there may be many overlapping features of a previous school's plan and the RPS Individual Student Plan.

RPS offers scheduling structure, materials, many accommodations, and various learning strategies that are generally helpful to students with ADHD or Learning Disabilities as part of its regular school program.

When a public school district is utilizing RPS as a placement for either an IEP or a Section 504 Plan, the public school and the student's family must be in agreement that the services available through Rock Point School's regular programming will be helpful to the student on the IEP or be in compliance with the Student's Section 504 Plan. In particular, this refers to RPS' regular program, including:

- Community, Academic and Dorm/Day Student Life and its policies and procedures
- Community Standards and Discipline in the form of consequences, as outlined in our Student Handbook
- as well as the Re-evaluation Process, is as a whole, designed to be the behavioral plan for our students.

Sometimes additional behavioral management supports are added to our Individual Student Plans. Our discipline and re-evaluation processes are designed to help our students develop and are not punishment in response to the manifestation of any disability. Beyond our regular program, the school district can arrange for supplemental services, at the school district's cost, if additional services would be helpful for the student, and Rock Point School will help the student fit these extra services into his or her schedule.

Whether a placement is made by the parent or by a public school district, Rock Point School must be notified if a student is on an IEP or a Section 504 Plan. If a student is on an IEP or a Section 504 Plan and is being placed at Rock Point School by the parent or the responsible School District in order to implement that IEP or Section 504 Plan, in order for a student to be enrolled and served by Rock Point School, the IEP or the Section 504 Plan must be amended to include and reflect placement for regular education services at Rock Point School, and it should reference the Rock Point Individual Student Plan. The IEP or Section 504 Plan must also specifically include Rock Point School's programs and procedures as the behavioral management plan.

If a student with a disability is placed at Rock Point School by a parent, accommodations can be planned in accordance with an Individual Student Plan. Services outside those provided for by Rock Point School, including evaluations and counseling, must be funded either by the student's home school district or the parents/guardians. In some cases, Rock Point can assist in locating such outside services.

Courses of Study

RPS provides 5 core courses for every student: English, History, Math, Science, and Art.

Morning Elective Classes

In addition to the core courses, morning electives offer a variety of topics for students to explore. Some offerings have included: stained glass, maker space, poetry, the annual play writing and performance. This is a gentle way for students to start their academic day. They are held M, W, F with Tuesday and Thursday put aside for Community Meeting and Reflections.

Grading Policy

Students at Rock Point School arrive with a diversity of academic preparation. Most of our students have had recent or prolonged difficulty in traditional classrooms. Many are unsure of their ability to be successful. The students in a given class may have very different skills from each other, gaps in their education, diagnosed or undiagnosed learning difficulties (or disabilities), and non-mainstream talents. With some notable and memorable exceptions, Rock Point students tend to be random, abstract, and intuitive thinkers rather than concrete-sequential thinkers. They tend toward the active, the dramatic, the emotional, and the personal in school, and they prefer active learning.

Many students arrive here out of practice with, or never having learned, the skills and habits necessary for successful learning. In this context, a teacher's job is two-fold: to build each student's confidence and self esteem by providing opportunities for success based on the student's strengths, and to help a student develop the skills and discipline necessary for success in educational and social communities beyond Rock Point School.

There is no precise formula for balancing these concerns. During the first quarter we are often doing "diagnostic" teaching, learning the strengths and weaknesses of each student, and, as necessary, adapting students' educational programs in conjunction with teachers, administrators, parents, and educational consultants. Teachers' meetings provide a chance to share and receive information about students' successes, frustrations, and behaviors.

Grades are distributed each quarter, and credit is awarded by quarter as well. Grade reports consist of a letter grade and a narrative report. At the end of this section, you will find a listing of numeric grades and corresponding letter grades. Some general guidelines for grade weighting are as follows:

For 9th, 10th, and 11th grades: Homework 40%, Quizzes 20%, Tests 20%, and Participation 20%.

For 12th grade: Homework 20%, Quizzes 25%, Tests 35%, and Participation 20%.

Rock Point School calculates an honor roll each quarter. A student will be on the honor roll if he/she has earned all A's and B's for the quarter. A student may have one C+, so long as the student also has an A.

Physical education grades, assessed by the dormitory staff, are pass/fail, or no credit. Elective classes are pass/fail as well.

Occasionally, a student will not have completed all course work by the end of the quarter. In this case, the student is given a grade of INCOMPLETE. The student is expected to complete the coursework as soon as possible, or within two weeks of the quarter's end. This is usually a straightforward process. The teacher provides the student with a list of work due to complete the course. A copy of this list is also kept in a log in the office to help staff who are monitoring detentions and study halls during this time. If a student is making progress but struggling to meet the educational goals of a particular curriculum, the teacher should consult with the administration to determine the best course of action and/or if other resources are available to help the student.

Students with incompletes will be required to attend study halls during this two-week period. At the end of this time, if all course work is not completed, but the student has mastered the educational goals of the quarter to the teacher's satisfaction, the teacher will record the grade earned (affected as it is by incomplete or undone assignments). If the student has not mastered the educational goals of the quarter to the teacher's satisfaction, the student will be required to meet with the teacher and the student's academic advisor to draw up a plan for completing the course. This plan, along with a list of work needing to be completed and an accounting of completed and graded work, will be turned over to the Dean of Students. If, for some reason, the course work is still not completed according to the plan, the administration, in consultation with parents and guardians, will decide on appropriate action. A student's failure to complete coursework may result in loss of privileges, suspension, or expulsion.

While Rock Point School will give a grade of F, a failing grade is issued as a last resort. In other words, at Rock Point, it may be possible for a student to receive an F, but it should be extremely difficult. We are working with many students who have gotten used to failing rather than trying, and we are working to break that cycle of failure with those students.

Grading/credits when beginning classes after the start of a quarter

1. If a student arrives before the mid-point of the RPS quarter and brings a current letter grade from the sending school we will average the sending school grade with grades at RPS during the current quarter.
2. If a student arrives before the mid-point of the quarter but brings no letter grade from a sending school the student will earn a letter grade based on work at RPS provided their attendance is strong and their grade average is above C. Students whose grade average is C or below will have a chance to earn a letter grade through our regular plan to handle incomplete grades.
3. Students who arrive after the midpoint of the quarter with no current grade from the sending school will not receive credit for the current quarter. However teachers may award credit with a grade of "Pass" in special instances where a student's attendance, effort and mastery of the topic warrants credit.

Grading/credit when leaving RPS before the end of a quarter

- If a student withdraws before the end of the quarter*, and more than half of the quarter has been completed, and the student is current with the curriculum work, the family may request that the student complete the quarter's credit. Substitutions may be made in curricula to reflect independent study. Grades awarded may be as a letter grade or on a P/F basis, at the school's discretion. The transcript may indicate that the quarter was completed off campus through independent study.
- If a student withdraws before the mid-quarter mark*, we will pass on current grades to the next school.
- If a student is asked to withdraw from the school for disciplinary reasons, at any time during the quarter, the student is not entitled to complete the quarter and earn credit. Rock Point School will forward a record of work completed during this quarter to the student's next school placement*.

***Note to above:**

Please note that the Enrollment Agreement provides that Rock Point School will not issue an official transcript for students whose account is not paid in full.

Grade Reports

Numerical Grading

Scale

97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-

Grade reports consist of a letter grade, a narrative description of the course and educational goals, and a narrative evaluation of the student's work, participation, accomplishments, and struggles. A few examples are provided below.

English: B

This quarter we worked on a variety of language arts and reading projects including vocabulary study, interviewing techniques, formal letter writing, reading and writing short stories and fables, oral book reports, and storytelling in front of an audience.

Jim does excellent work at times. His written fable was outstanding. His vocabulary tests are very good. The areas that need his attention are homework and class interactions. His impulsive incendiary comments hamper his progress and the progress of the class.

Written homework in particular needs his attention. Looking at Jim's first year of high school overall shows progress in many areas, however. I am sure that Jim will gain understanding and control of his words and actions in his time at Rock Point. I enjoyed working with Jim this year and look forward to his sophomore year.

Earth Science: A

This quarter we began with the study of soil stratification. From this subject we advanced to the subject of water and its effects on the environment. The students took part in many labs that incorporated the relationship of water and the soil profile. Many a morning we were out getting our feet muddy, studying the area around us for the effects of gullies and moving water. The quarter ended with the investigation of the universe and its components. We will continue this subject into the next quarter.

Alice is a competitive and motivated student. It was great to see her work outdoors and have fun while learning. We did a lot of laughing during the outdoor labs. Alice worked well in our group exercises and was motivated to be a leader. I enjoyed her comments and participation in class discussions.

Progress Reports

Approximately mid-way through each quarter the school will send out brief academic progress reports for the regular morning classes. The reports serve to let everyone know that the student is doing well and can expect a passing grade, or, when necessary, to let everyone know that the student is behind in his or her schoolwork and is at risk of being incomplete at the quarter's end.

Grade Reports

At the close of each quarter the school will send out Grade Reports. The report includes a letter grade and narrative for each subject. The narrative will give a little flavor of the work that was covered in the classroom, highlight your student's particular work and sometimes make suggestions to the student about how to improve in the upcoming marking period.

Graduation Requirements

Rock Point School's mission points the curriculum towards high standards. We want all of our graduates to be ready for a further step in their educational journey after graduation from Rock Point. That explains why we require all enrolled students to attend classes in English, Math, Science, History, Art, Physical Education and to participate in Reflections and Community Meeting. We want RPS graduates to take full advantage of their time in high school, whether or not they plan to go on to further education.

Notwithstanding our goals for student achievement, we know that many of our students may come from school situations where they failed to earn full credit for their work, and their transcript may reflect missing credits and courses. It is for that reason that we have purposely kept the minimum number of credits required for graduation to 18.5 credits. This is a minimum requirement, not a target. We do not automatically graduate students when they accumulate

18.5 credits. Rock Point School awards diplomas only to students who have attended four full years of high school and who have met the credit requirements for graduation.

A student's transcript will be examined closely at least three times during their stay at Rock Point School. The first time is when they enroll. At that time a transcript will be set up for and any high school credits they bring to Rock Point School will be entered. This transcript will be the basis for placing the student in a class year and also be evaluated for an expected date of graduation. While the student's advisors will refer to the transcript from time to time, the next close examination will be at the beginning of the student's 11th grade. The results of a degree audit, showing exactly which courses and credits are needed for graduation and a plan for fulfilling the requirements will be shared with the student and family. A similar degree audit is done at the close of the student's 11th grade year, confirming that the student has a plan to complete all graduation requirements in the coming academic year. This audit is likewise shared with the student, her family and her folder.

No student transcript will be provided to the student, parents or to schools to which the student is applying unless a student's account is fully current and paid, as determined in the sole discretion of the Head of School or Dean of Students.

Official transcripts are sent to the asking school only. Families may receive an unofficial transcript should they wish.

College Advising

During our students' junior year, we work with them informally and as they express interest and readiness regarding preparing for life after high school. All juniors take the PSAT in October and most now take their first SAT in May of the same year. With seniors, our work is more formal. All seniors take Senior Seminar as their first-quarter afternoon art class. This class meets three times per week (an hour each class) specifically for the purpose of helping seniors acquire skills and begin the college application process. The seminar offers résumé writing workshops, job-application workshops (from letter to interview), assistance in registering for the SAT and ACT tests, and an introduction to the college application. As part of the seminar, seniors are also taken to a local college fair and meet individually with Emily Skoler, in her afternoon role as the guidance counselor, to discuss education and career plans and to begin the process of finding colleges and/or job and training opportunities.

We work closely with students on their applications and essays, helping them make connections between past experiences and future goals. The Academic Counselor, Abbey Baker, also works with students on their financial aid applications. Because Rock Point is not a traditional high school, we write detailed letters of recommendation for each student, helping to place each student into the context of their life as well as into the broader context of college-bound applicants.

After the first quarter ends, some seniors may choose to continue working with the academic counselor during the afternoon. To work with Rock Point students on planning for their future is to be constantly reminded that they have been set back in their lives due to one circumstance or another. While these circumstances have made them “wise beyond their years” in some ways, they are often less worldly wise and confident than their peers. At the same time that we are looking ahead with our juniors and seniors, we are also filling in gaps from the past. We try to pay close attention to each student’s skills and readiness for the next step in her/his education beyond the high school classroom.

Please note that, although we work closely with each senior, we cannot take the place of parents and their role in the college application process. Questions about finances, the timing of college plans, choosing the right college, help with filling out the applications, and communicating with college admissions offices all remain within parents’ purview. If you are interested in obtaining additional help with these tasks, there are college planning counselors in Burlington whom we can recommend to you.

Outside of Academics

Work Crew

Work crews illustrate how invested a student is in being a full member of the Rock Point School community. Work crews are the main vehicles with which our building stays clean. Work crews build character. Every student is required to do two work crews a day Monday through Thursday, and one or two on Friday through Sunday. The jobs average about twenty minutes each, with everyone having a chance to do longer and shorter work crews because everyone rotates through most of the work crews throughout the course of the year.

When everyone does their share, things go smoothly and the building looks great. If a person chooses to not do their work crew, the responsibility falls onto others and, in addition to getting consequences, staff and the students' peers (usually the ones who are most directly affected) call them on not doing their part of the work and explain the importance of carrying one's weight in a group. Good performances in work crews can be useful for students applying for

jobs or asking for letters of recommendation from the school. For other specifics please see the work crew comments in the Community section of the student handbook.

P/E

Physical Education class is from 3:30 - 4:45 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. These classes are mandatory for all students, unless they have arranged an alternative plan approved by the Dean of Students or Director of the Dorm. First year students and sophomores are required to participate. The sports that are offered depend on the interests of the students of each particular year. Specific examples of types of sports are listed in the Afternoon Options of the student handbook.

Meetings

There are Dorm floor meetings every week. The hour-long meetings are traditionally held on Sunday or Thursday nights. The meetings provide an intimate space for each student to bring up any concerns or questions they might have, and be able to discuss them with their peers, with the help of adult facilitation. The topics range from very personal to very perfunctory and functional issues, all of which are productive; but most importantly, there is a place for meaningful issues to surface when they arise.

Weekend Activities

There are a wide range of weekend activities that are offered. The range of activities may include: getting outdoors and hiking or walking, playing sports, skiing, snowboarding, making art, playing music, going to or renting a movie, making a video, going to a coffee house, cooking, playing games, generally having fun and being silly together in healthy, safe ways. Students are required to do one to four activities each weekend, depending on the student's level. The higher a student's Tier, the fewer activities they are required to do. The main focus of weekend activities is to provide fun, healthy things to do, and to have as much adult/adolescent contact as possible. There are many times students sign up for a particular activity, not because of the activity, but because of the staff member who is leading the activity. Students are encouraged to think of activities that they want to do so that the dorm staff can offer what people want to do. The dorm staff also try to offer activities that students haven't done and encourage them to try new things.

We encourage students to suggest activities and support them to lead activities as time and money permits. Some parents ask if they can suggest weekend activities - yes! We welcome all suggestions.

Alcoholics Anonymous

We have found Alcoholics Anonymous to be a very important resource to some of our students. Should your child want to continue with AA, or begin a relationship with AA, please let us know and we will help identify an appropriate meeting.

Safety

Releases

There are several release forms and permission statements in your pre-arrival paperwork that we ask you to sign when you enroll your student and each subsequent year.

Asbestos Notice

September 2022

TO: Parents, teachers, employees, trustees, other persons associated with Rock Point School.

FROM: C.J. Spirito
Rock Point School
1 Rock Point Road
Burlington, VT 05408
802-863-1104

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (40 CFR 763.93 [g] [4]) requires that written notice be given that Rock Point School has a management plan for the safe control and maintenance of asbestos-containing materials found in the school buildings. Our management plan is available for you to see. It is kept in the office here at school.

Feel free to call to make an appointment to see our management plan.

Please note that despite the alarming nature of the words hazard and asbestos, Rock Point School mounted a \$65,000 project in 1987, and safely removed all asbestos except that which is bound up in building materials such as floor tile and tile mastic. In 1999, as part of the renovations in the kitchen, much of the last remaining tile and mastic was removed by an asbestos management company. The same company removed all windows that contained

asbestos in our exterior caulking during the 2022 window replacement project. The school building is a safe environment despite the language of the above notice. If you have any questions about this matter I would be happy to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

C.J. Spirito
Head of School

Student Life

Dormitory

Rock Point School works to make appropriate decisions when assigning our students to dorm floors. We have two dorm floors – 2nd floor and 3rd floor. Traditionally, these were called the “boys floor” and the “girls floor.” As there has been a shift in our understanding of gender fluidity, as well as the needs of our transgender and nonbinary students, we have shifted how and why room assignment decisions are made.

The physical layout of our building remains the same, with a second floor and a third floor for boarding students. For students who are cisgender (meaning they identify as the gender they were assigned at birth), males will live on the 2nd floor and females will live on the 3rd floor.

If a student is a transgender boy, he will live on the 2nd floor with cisgender males. If a student is a transgender girl, she will live on the 3rd floor with cisgender females. There may be situations where a student and/or their parents request that for safety or comfort reasons, the student live on the floor that does not align with their gender identity. These requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Students who identify as non-binary will decide (with the help of their parents) which floor they prefer to live on.

That said, parents of cisgender students should understand that their child may live next to a transgender student or a non-binary student. If a parent is concerned about their child living next to a student with a different biology, we hope they understand we are intentional and thoughtful about the boarding experience at Rock Point, and trust us to provide as welcoming, safe and comfortable an experience as possible for our students.

Relationships

You will note from the Student Handbook that the school takes a position against exclusive relationships. At the same time, we know that in matters of the heart, adolescents are learning to form the bonds we hope they will hold as adults. We know as well, that no amount of regulation can stand against the power of infatuation, love and sexual yearnings. Therefore, while we make our own efforts to regulate students' behavior, we do not pretend that our expectations and rules are the only safeguards they need. The school nurse provides information, counseling, referrals and prophylactics to students who ask for them. In addition, the school provides education on matters of sexuality and safety.

Rock Point School Discipline and the Re-evaluation Process

Please see the Student Handbook ([pg. 62](#) and [Appendix G](#)) for disciplinary provisions. These rules are components of RPS' comprehensive plan for responding to student misbehavior designed to promote positive development.

Appealing an RPS Decision

In the event that you find yourself in disagreement with a decision or action at the school, your first step is to contact the person (teacher, dorm parent, administrator) who is directly responsible for the item with which you disagree. Arrange a meeting or telephone conversation in which the matter can be discussed and, we hope, resolved.

In the event that the matter cannot be resolved in this manner, the next step is to appeal the school's decision in writing to the Dean of School, who will consider your appeal and will investigate its background as he or she determines to be appropriate. Should it be necessary, the Head of School will be engaged by the Dean, otherwise the Dean will arrange for meetings and/or discussions as necessary to learn the facts and to gain insight to inform his decision.

In the case of student discipline, please see the Student Handbook for procedures for review and appeal of student discipline.

Counseling

There are three main levels of support, which fall under the rubric of counseling. The first, most informal, is the continuous background bath of banter, talk, advice, questioning and admonition which accompany your student throughout the day. You know this style well from family life at home. The difference at Rock Point School is one of degree: there are many more adults talking to your child here than at home.

The second level is the more intentional, focused counseling which happens in dorm floor meetings and in advisor meetings. These meetings occur on a fairly regular schedule and will cover a variety of topics. Other meetings may be arranged to respond to particular difficulties or opportunities. The Dean of Students and the School Nurse have many chances to counsel students in one-on-one sessions.

While the staff of the school are practiced and very adept in their jobs as counselors, they are not trained to provide the services of trained professional therapists. Also, we think these services are most effective when they happen outside the school setting, by providing better focus and a higher sense of confidentiality. We know too that no one person can be all things to all people, so we prefer to take advantage of the great variety of providers in the Burlington area. We do our best to schedule appointments to fit the students' schedule and our ability to provide transportation. When we cannot give a student a ride we have to rely on the public bus system, a private taxi, or Uber or Lyft.

Counseling is a very important and sometimes difficult part of a student's life here and we rely on good communication with the student's family and home counselors to make the most of this resource.

Community Issues

Sexuality

Rock Point School has a philosophy of wellness that encourages healthy and safe sexual development and appropriate boundaries. We are concerned with the development of the whole person, which includes social, emotional and sexual development. We believe that it is in the best interest of the students at Rock Point to learn about themselves and each other without participating in oral sex, vaginal intercourse, and/or anal intercourse while at Rock Point School, due to potential pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the emotional hardships that may be associated with the above-mentioned behaviors.

In keeping with that philosophy we discourage sexual relationships, and will take action based on considerations of maturity, appropriateness, health and safety. "Action" may include one or more items on the following list:

- Conversing with staff
- Conversing with parent(s)
- Conversing with sexual partner and staff
- Having an appointment with the school nurse

- Having a medical checkup at health center
- Reading/journaling about healthy sexual relationships
- Meeting with the student's therapist

If we believe that a student's behavior or relationship is unhealthy, we might implement a separation time period. In larger boarding and day schools it is easier for students to find time away from each other because of the natural rhythm and geographical logistics of school days. That is less the case here at Rock Point, where all students take classes together in the same building and most of whom live together around the clock.

A separation time period could include one or a combination of the following options:

- No same-room rule for "X" number of days
- Concurrent times away from school to talk with parents and gain space from partner
- Different, possible consecutive times away from school to talk with parents and gain space from partner

The time can be flexible, with the number of days determined by how long it would take for the goals to be accomplished. Goals for the family could include:

- Seeing parents face-to-face
- Talking about family expectations/guidelines
- Talking about how the family's expectations interface with the expectations at Rock Point
- Taking space from the sexual partner
- Taking space from any peer/stress/drama at the school to regain perspective

These family meetings can happen at home or parents may choose to come to Vermont to meet with their student.

If the relationship is particularly unhealthy and/or there is behavior involving oral sex or vaginal or anal intercourse, the students may be suspended in-school or out-of-school. A "particularly unhealthy relationship" could be identified by a number of elements. Examples of such elements are a significant age difference, a significant maturity difference, consistently unbalanced power, and too much exclusive focus on one person.

Administration

Confidentiality

Our goal is to keep the lines of communication between the student, the family and the school as open as possible. We tell students that we will do our best to keep whatever they say in confidence as confidential as possible, but under no circumstances will we ever promise absolute confidence. All staff are required to act in the student's best interest of health and safety and this means that all staff must be free to decide when to pass information along to fellow staff members, the nurse, or the school administration.

All staff are considered Mandated Reporters in the state of Vermont. If any staff member reasonably suspects child abuse or neglect, they are legally required to make a report to the Family Services Division (FSD) — within 24 hours of the time we first received or observed information about the suspected abuse/neglect.

Rights Related To Student Records

Rock Point School affords parents and students over the age of 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to student education records and the student record information.

"Student educational record" means those records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by RPS. The term does not include those records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker or records that are maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized healthcare professional or paraprofessional that are made, maintained or used in the treatment of the student.

1. *Provided the student's account is fully paid and current, as determined in the sole discretion of the Rock Point School Head of School, Dean of Students or Assistant Academic Dean,* parents and eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit, to the Head of School, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Head of School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected, or if parents or the student live at a distance that makes inspection and review impracticable, then a copy will be sent to them. RPS reserves the right not to disclose certain portions of a student record including confidential letters of recommendation and the financial records of the parents. No final official transcript will be created until such time as a student's account is fully paid.

2. *Again, provided the student's account is fully paid and current as determined in the sole discretion of the Rock Point School Head of School, Dean of Students or Assistant Academic Dean,* parents or eligible students may request the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write a request to the Headmaster, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision.

3. RPS parents have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education record or the record itself.

- One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to RPS school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by RPS as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another RPS official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record or obtain educational record information in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.
- "Directory information" will be provided without parental or student consent by the Rock Point School, in its discretion, to third parties. Directory Information means information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- Additionally, RPS will, without parental or student consent, disclose student records or educational record information to officials of another school, school system or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll or where the student is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

- RPS will, without parental or eligible student consent, disclose educational record information pursuant to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena or as the law may otherwise require.
- RPS will, without parental or eligible student consent, disclose records in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- RPS will, without parental or eligible student consent, disclose student records or student record information to an accrediting agency to carry out its accrediting functions.
- RPS will, without parental or eligible student consent, disclose student record or student record information including to the School's insurers and attorneys, in order to defend the School and its staff in response to any claims from the student and/or parents, or related to any claims advanced by the School.

Extra Fees

We try to keep from adding on any extra charges to the tuition, but some items seem better handled separately. Those may include:

- distance-learning classes for students who wish to fill in gaps in their record. Typically, we use Brigham Young University, American School in Chicago, and the North Dakota State School. Typically fees for these classes have run from \$80.00 to \$160.00.
- Some students opt for individual tutoring. The school can help locate an appropriate tutor, but the costs of tutoring are not included in tuition.
- non-RPS college counseling
- weekly allowances
- ski trips special trips, ie. community service trip or an international trip
- Specific interests that students elect to pursue that is beyond what the school offers, such as horseback riding.

Scholarship Support

In the spring the Director of Admissions sends out a letter to parents who received aid for the previous year and any other parents who are interested in receiving financial aid. Parents are asked to complete a financial aid packet and to send a copy of the two previous years' federal income tax forms. Part of the financial aid packet is a form, which goes to a financial aid service called SSSFA in Princeton, NJ. SSSFA reviews the information and sends back a report of what

they believe each family can afford based on their calculations. Un-enrolled students who are applying for aid for the upcoming school year are asked to complete the same forms as they apply.

After reviewing the finished financial aid packets for each family applying for aid, the Director of Admissions will make recommendations and bring them to a meeting of the scholarship committee. The scholarship committee is made up of four people: Head of School, Dean of Students, Director of Admissions and a rotating fourth person, often a teacher, trustee, or other staff member. The amount of scholarship aid that is given is ultimately determined by the Head of School based on the budget for the upcoming school year.

The scholarship committee gives scholarships first based on financial need determined by the completed financial aid packet. Second, the committee looks at the individual merit of each student:

- Where is the student coming from?
- How is the student currently doing in the school program?
- What is the anticipated success of the student in the coming year?
- How well does the student match the mission of the school?

After scholarships are determined, parents receive a letter of acceptance or rejection and a date by which they need to sign an enrollment agreement for the upcoming school year. By then the remaining amount of scholarship for students who apply after the spring meeting is known. These students are put on a financial aid waiting list. Scholarship meetings are arranged as needed during the summer to determine which students will receive the remaining aid if there is any.

Scholarships are up for review every quarter. If a student is consistently not following the Rock Point Program, their scholarship may be placed under a probation period in which the student would need to demonstrate a change in behavior. Parents, student, and staff would be informed about this in order to ensure that there is ample time and support for the student to get back on track. Although Rock Point School has this option, it has not ever removed a student's scholarship during the course of a year.

School Data

Governance

Rock Point School is a loving creation of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont and has been serving young people since 1928. It is governed by a Board of Trustees with the Bishop of Vermont as an

ex officio member. Members are elected to the board at the Diocesan Convention in the fall of each year. The school is the beneficiary of approximately \$275,000 each year from individuals and parishes in the Diocese and from individuals and foundations from a larger field. Family members of Students and of Rock Point School Staff are among our most generous donors. The majority of our financial support comes from private tuition and the school relies on some federal and state programs such as Title I. Rock Point School does not discriminate against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicap, veteran's status or sexual orientation in its recruitment, admissions or employment activities.

Memberships and Certifications

Rock Point School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and by the Vermont State Department of Education. The school is a member of The Association of Independent Schools in New England, The National Association of Independent Schools, The Vermont Independent School Association, and The Council of Independent Schools.