



Parent and Student Handbook 2022-2023



Massachusetts **Mayflower Academy**

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is full-time online private high school based in Maynard, Massachusetts. We offer a rigorous teacher-led curriculum. Students choose from more than 200 courses including 25 College Board-approved Advanced Placement courses and unique and engaging electives. Learning takes place within a safe, secure, and supportive environment. Join Us!



Dear Families,

Welcome to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy! We are excited you are interested in pursuing a diploma from our flexible, fully online school, where students are given opportunities to realize their potential and increase their love of learning.

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is the culmination of more than twenty years of experience providing students with rich, engaging online learning opportunities through VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.). We believe in getting to know our students and providing them with a curriculum that meets their academic needs and improves their independence, communication, and self-advocacy skills.

Students at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy are supported by certified teachers, administrative staff, and a parent/guardian who work cooperatively to ensure students stay on track, understand expectations, and can complete their courses on schedule. Teachers engage with students throughout each week to ensure they understand the material they are learning and to help resolve any confusion and clarify expectations as needed. Teachers grade student work and provide supportive feedback, so students know just what needs improving, and the areas in which they excel.

I am proud to have been a part of this organization for the past 18 years and know that our dedication to student success and robust learning experiences will benefit many students who desire a full-time online program of studies. I look forward to working with your family and wish you the best of luck as you begin your journey at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy!

All the best,

Amy Michalowski

Amy Michalowski
Dean

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MISSION AND BELIEFS

At Massachusetts Mayflower Academy, we believe in high quality, collaborative learning where student exchange and interaction is integral to the instructional process. We believe education should not be limited by barriers of time, place, or availability. We believe that online learning offers students the benefits of highly qualified faculty and an innovative curriculum made up of diverse, exciting learning opportunities in a global classroom.

The mission of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy, powered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), is to help students graduate from high school and succeed in life by providing an engaging, challenging, and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of students and families.

Each year, thousands of students engage with classmates from across the country and around the world in VHS Learning courses. Each course section is limited in size, ensuring students and teachers form a learning community to explore course concepts together. With more than 200 courses offered each semester, we meet student academic needs and provide opportunities to explore career interests.

OVERVIEW

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is a full-time, online school offered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), a non-profit organization with more than twenty-five years of experience providing high quality, collaborative, online courses to students and schools. We believe all students can benefit from access to a robust variety of core, elective, and Advanced Placement courses. We have worked with schools and families since 1996 and are proud to offer a full-time high school option for students desiring a private, fully online education.

Central to our program is the curriculum, which consists of courses developed by experienced classroom teachers and aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks or appropriate national content standard. Certified teachers instruct all courses, and we maintain course enrollment caps of 25 students in almost all cases, to ensure students can form relationships with their teachers and peers and to foster a vibrant learning community. Students are expected to work on a paced, asynchronous schedule, with individual and collaborative assignments due each week, but with the flexibility to work at a time that suits each individual student's needs. The balance of flexibility and structure at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy helps build individual accountability that will be invaluable in post-secondary pursuits.

Our staff work closely with each student's learning coach, who is generally a parent or guardian that will support the student in the home environment. Learning coaches have access to the student's grades and are expected to communicate with the student's counselor and with a member of our staff on a regular basis to ensure any challenges are understood and addressed in a timely manner.

In addition, our students are encouraged to engage with other full-time students in a variety of extracurricular activities, including online book groups, clubs, virtual field trips, hangouts, to name a few. Information on social and extracurricular activities will be provided to families through our monthly newsletter.

PROGRAM APPROVAL

Accreditation

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is offered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), which is accredited by Middle States Association (MSA-CESS) and Cognia. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as an approved, diploma-granting, private school, pursuant to requirements set forth in M.G.L. c. 76, § 1. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is accredited as a full-time private school through Cognia.

Cognia is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that is committed to helping schools improve by conducting rigorous, on-site external reviews of Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure all learners realize their fullest potential. Cognia was created in 2006 through a merger of the Pre-K-12 divisions of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). It expanded in 2011 upon addition of the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC). To learn more about Cognia visit their [website](#).

NCAA

Student athletes can visit the NCAA website for information on NCAA eligibility and to find a list of courses approved for initial eligibility. Please use CEEB code 221356 to search for NCAA-approved courses. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy (NCAA code is 850943) uses NCAA courses approved under VHS Learning. Specific questions on NCAA eligibility can be answered by the student's counselor.

College Board/Advanced Placement

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is pleased to offer a comprehensive list of courses fully approved by the College Board for Advanced Placement (AP) credit. The full list of courses can be found in the [course catalog](#).

LEARNING TEAM

Though our students work online, they do not work alone! Our students are supported by their teachers, learning coach, and our staff. Each of these critical support components are described below:

Teachers

Our teachers are certified educators who have received additional training in the pedagogy of online instruction. Teachers are committed to working with each student to ensure the best possible chance for success. We require teachers to be present and engaged in the classroom throughout the week and to respond to student inquiries and grade student work in a timely manner.

Learning Coach

The learning coach is typically a parent, though it can be any responsible adult. The learning coach plays a critical role in providing mentoring for the student and helping to facilitate communication with teachers and staff if problems arise. The learning coach has access to student grades and is provided with grade reports by email on a regular basis.

Academic Liaison

Each student is assigned an academic liaison, a member of our staff who will be the primary “go-to” for the student and learning coach. The academic liaison meets with the student regularly via phone, webinar, or at the Maynard office, to review progress, connect with the student and understand their unique circumstances, and troubleshoot issues that might arise during the academic year. The student is required to meet with the academic liaison as a layer of accountability and support. Students who miss more than 2 meetings are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the school.

School Counselor

Our school counselor helps students plan their program of studies and provides support for the college admissions process. Although your school counselor provides college planning support, engaging with a professional college counseling organization is an option available to your family. Choosing a college counseling organization is a personal decision and should be made after consulting with multiple companies. We do not endorse any specific organizations.

Our school counselor is available to support the social-emotional health of our students and can refer students or families to additional support services as needed. Our school counselor uses email and phone calls as the primary method of communication with students and can meet a student and parent/guardian at the VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.) Maynard office if desired.

Support Staff

Support staff work with teachers and learning coaches to ensure students are supported throughout their journey at our school. Each student works with an enrollment counselor to ensure course selection compliments student abilities and post-secondary goals. During the academic year, our administrative team is available by phone and through our [Service Center](#) to resolve issues or answer questions.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is a challenging, engaging program that provides students with a variety of options on their path to a high school diploma. Most of the curriculum is provided by VHS Learning, an accredited program with a catalog of more than 300 core, elective, and Advanced Placement courses taught by certified teachers. Students select courses to meet their graduation requirements. If a student requires a course that is not available, our team will source the course at no additional cost.

Curricular Approach

Our curricular approach includes a variety of objective and open-ended assignments, weekly discussion board activities, collaborative activities, and hands-on lab assignments. Students participate fully in the community of learners in their course and must login to the course at least four times per week to collaborate with their teacher and peers.

Course Materials

Most courses do not require additional materials. All courses use a variety of open educational resources and web-based materials for dissemination of content. Most core courses and all Advanced Placement courses utilize eBooks. If a student desires an additional hard copy textbook, they can request the ISBN for the book and can purchase it at their own expense. When required, lab kits are provided to students so that they can complete hands-on lab activities.

Technology and Course Platform

Student registration information is contained within our [Student Information System](#) (SIS). The SIS is used for course registration, student documentation (IEP/504 plan documentation, transcripts from previous schools, test results, etc.), monitoring grades, and for transcript generation.

Courses are delivered on the [Brightspace by D2L platform](#), which provides access to eBooks, plagiarism detection tools, collaboration tools, and other third-party products that might be used in classes. After enrollment, students receive a username and password that is used to access the learning management system.

Technology Requirements

Our courses use the Internet as the primary vehicle for instruction. Students must have Internet connectivity and have access to the Internet daily.

Courses may contain links to outside websites, and while every effort is made to maintain these links, we cannot guarantee that users following links from within a course will not encounter sites hosting malware or viruses. We strongly recommend all users install malware/virus protection from a reputable vendor, and make sure that the definitions are updated regularly to prevent infection.

Students can view lesson content, submit course assignments, and fully participate in most courses on mobile devices, including iPads, iPhones, and Android devices.

The following features within the learning environment will not work on portable devices:

- Some software is not compatible with iOS devices (iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch).
- Courses which use installed software may require regular access to a desktop/laptop computer for installation and use.

To view specific technical requirements that may be required for each course, review the course descriptions in the [course catalog](#).

Technology Support

All courses contain instructions that provide step-by-step explanations for technical tasks. Students have 24-7 access to file a [support request](#) to request support or ask questions. Requests for support are resolved during the hours of 7 AM – 5 PM ET, Monday through Friday. Phone support is available Monday through Friday from 8 AM – 5 PM ET by calling 978-897-1900. Students also have access to Private Topic areas within their courses to ask course instructors for assistance as needed.

Student Orientation

Prior to beginning courses, students complete Student Orientation, a self-paced module that provides an overview of course structure and navigation. Students remain enrolled in Student Orientation throughout the year, so they always have access to this resource. In addition, each course contains a module entitled *Start Here*, which introduces general academic policies, provides tips for time management and organizing work, and explains additional elements of our courses.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

What's Unique About Massachusetts Mayflower Academy

At Massachusetts Mayflower Academy you will be working closely with your teacher and the other students in your online classroom. In our *small-group* classes, a teacher works with you and your classmates to create a classroom community. Classes have frequent online discussions and opportunities to work in groups, so it is important that you stay on track. Coming to a class discussion after everyone has moved on is like talking in an empty room - you might have a lot to say, but there isn't anyone to respond! Use these tips to help you have a successful experience at your new school.

Pace Yourself

Former students shared the most important lesson they learned from taking an online class. Almost every student gave the same advice: **Do not save all your work till the last day of the week!** Often what might look like a quick assignment takes a bit of time. If you leave assignments until the last day of the week, you will likely not have time to pass in high quality work. **Help yourself by planning and setting goals for due dates throughout the week.**

Attend Class Regularly

Your classes are somewhat flexible; you can do your coursework in the evening or on weekends. With flexibility comes responsibility. Though the minimum login requirement is 3 times per week, students who are successful login at least 4-5 times per week. Honors and Advanced Placement students should login 5 times per week to maximize success.

Plan Ahead

There are times when life is hectic – **if you have a valid reason why you might not meet course deadlines, communicate with your teacher and academic liaison ahead of time.** Often your teacher will be accommodating, but it is difficult after you have been absent.

Get to Know Your Academic Liaison

Your academic liaison will help you sort out any problems you may encounter. Check-in with your academic liaison regularly and ask for help prioritizing work or for tips and strategies for success. Do not wait until you are struggling before you ask for help!

Suggested Plan: How you might approach your week

- **Check the News for reminders** or important updates from your teachers.
- If it is your first class visit of the week, **review the Weekly Overview.** Print the table to create a plan and track your work.
- **Pay close attention to due dates.** Although most activities are due at the end of the week, some (especially discussions) might have mid-week due dates.
- **Check your Private Topic daily** to see if you have messages from your teacher!
- **Focus on your goals of the day:** participate in class discussions, complete a written assignment, check in with a group. Your work will vary each week, so tackle assignments consistently. Read and post discussions a few times during the week!

GETTING HELP

Self-advocacy

In addition to time management skills and strong work habits, our students develop self-advocacy skills. Self-advocacy means taking responsibility and initiative to get what you need – not waiting for others to act for you. For some students, this skill comes naturally, while for others it takes effort.

One way to be a strong self-advocate is to **ask questions of your teacher and academic liaison**. It is natural to have lots of questions. The answer to some will be clear, but when the answer is not, communication is key. **We cannot answer a question or solve a problem if we don't know the question or problem exists!** Let us know how we can help you.

Tips for Requesting Help

- Don't be shy! Other students probably have the same question as you.
- Make your questions specific – providing detail helps your teacher solve your problem or provide information that will help you understand the concept more fully.
- Ask questions in the right area – read below about different areas for asking questions.
- Be patient! Teachers are expected to respond to your question within 1-day, Monday to Friday. Many teachers respond faster than this, but you should be aware of this expectation.
- Don't be afraid to ask your academic liaison for help. If you are struggling to get answers to your questions, ask your academic liaison or file a support request. We are happy to help provide you with additional support and want you to succeed.

Asking Questions

Each class has discussion boards for specific types of questions. Students will be provided with additional information in each course. **We ask that students not use email to communicate with teachers.** When students post questions within the course we can assist as needed.

- **Have a Question?** – In this discussion board, students post questions about navigation, problems locating or posting assignments, or more details on assignment expectations.
- **Private Topic** – You have a private topic (PT) where you can communicate with your teacher if you have questions about grades, information about absences, or other private matters.

Additional Suggestions

- Review the Student Success Module for tips and strategies to improve success in online classes.
- Complete assignments in a word processing program and cut/paste work into the assignment. This is helpful in case a technical issue creates a problem for posting work.
- Don't forget to click Post when you upload assignments, and for Dropbox work, check to make sure your files have uploaded before submitting your work.
- Don't be afraid to use the Service Center to file a support request for technical support.
- If all else fails, please call the school office for support. We can be reached at 978-897-1900 between 8AM and 5PM ET Monday - Friday.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Application Process

Students may apply to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy at any time. Start dates are at the beginning of the fall or spring semester each academic year. Students must be in grades 9-12, under the age of 21, and must desire a high school diploma. Go to [our website](#) to learn more about the application process and to submit the information form to receive information about applying to our school.

Acceptance to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy

Our admissions team reviews each student's application and academic transcript to determine if the student has the foundation necessary to be successful in our program. We speak with each family considering enrollment to ensure our program is the right fit. Factors such as past academic record, discipline records, grade point average, and personal statements are considered during the application process. Not every student applying to our school is accepted.

Application Appeal Process

Students who are denied admission to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy can appeal the decision by submitting a written letter of appeal to the Dean. The Dean will convene a review panel to review the application materials and determine if there are extenuating circumstances that warrant admission. Decisions of the review panel will be final and will be delivered to the appellant within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Dual Diploma Application

Students who wish to remain matriculated at a local school and earn credit towards a Massachusetts Mayflower Academy diploma can apply to our Dual Diploma Program. In this program, students take at least 6 credits from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy. Generally, students will take 2-3 years to complete the 6 credits that they require from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy.

Student transcripts are evaluated to ensure their transfer credits and Massachusetts Mayflower Academy credits meet the graduation requirements and prepare students for the college application process. Dual diploma students are considered Massachusetts Mayflower Academy students and will have access to the support of academic liaisons and the school counselor for course planning, student support, and college admissions support.

Dual diploma tuition is based on the total number of credits the student will complete during their time at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy and will be shared with the student and family before admission is finalized.

English Language Learners

VHS Learning courses are written in English, so students who attend Massachusetts Mayflower Academy must have appropriate English language skills. Students should have a WIDA score of 4 or better in reading and writing to enroll in Massachusetts Mayflower Academy.

Enrollment Requirements

Once accepted, the following documents are required before students will be considered successfully enrolled in Massachusetts Mayflower Academy:

- Massachusetts Mayflower Academy online general information form
- Proof of identification via I-9 form (copy of birth certificate, passport, and/or driver's license)
- Student responses to application essay questions
- Health information form
- Academic records, transcripts, and release of records form
- Application fee and first semester tuition payment
- Signature agreeing to tuition and refund requirements
- Signature agreeing to adhere to handbook policies
- Placement tests (as required)

Part-time Students

Students interested in taking online courses on a part-time basis may do so via the VHS Learning supplemental education program. Students enrolled in VHS Learning courses are not enrolled in Massachusetts Mayflower Academy unless they have completed the application process and have been accepted to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy. For information about VHS Learning please visit the [VHS Learning website](#).

Registration process

Once application requirements have been met, transcripts are analyzed to determine course requirements for graduation. The student and learning coach approve the course plan before course enrollments are finalized. Enrollment notification and links to the learning management system are sent via email once registration into courses has been finalized.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 must submit, in writing, a request to withdraw the student from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy. Tuition will be refunded according to the tuition agreement signed upon admission. A student who withdraws from our school will be expected to share feedback, a reason for withdrawal, and a plan to ensure continuity of the student's education. Any student under compulsory attendance age will be reported to the appropriate state/local agency to ensure continuity of the student's education.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Accommodations

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy does not complete academic testing for students with disabilities that impact their learning. If a family believes a student would benefit from accommodations that require a mental health diagnosis or neuropsychological evaluation, the family must seek those evaluations and determinations through their own clinicians. Students who attend Massachusetts Mayflower Academy might be eligible to receive academic testing, therapy, and related services through their district of residence.

Teachers will provide basic accommodations for students who might need extended time. Additional academic support or specialized services are the responsibility of the family. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy requires families to request accommodations from the College Board using the [parent request protocol](#).

Academic Calendar

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy follows the [VHS Learning academic calendar](#). Courses are typically either semester-length or full-year (two semester). The fall and spring semesters are 15 weeks in duration. Full-year courses are 33 weeks in duration with a break between weeks 15 and 16. Semester calendars are available on the web site prior to the start of each academic year.

In addition, there are a limited number of flexible, summer, and credit recovery courses offered on different schedules. Summer courses are generally available for credit recovery and are offered in two four-week sessions or one eight-week session during July and August. Flexible courses are self-paced courses that start at the beginning of each month. Credit recovery courses are fifteen-week courses with rolling start dates. Complete course offerings can be found in the [course catalog](#).

Advanced Placement: AP Classroom

Students are expected to access and utilize AP Classroom resources as directed by their teachers. This requires students to have college Board accounts.

Advanced Placement: Summer Work

AP courses have required summer assignments that are submitted during Week 1 of the academic year and are graded by the teacher. Summer assignments are expected to take approximately 5 hours total and cover essential content for the course. Students that enroll in an AP course in late summer have flexibility to turn the work in through Week 3, though students are encouraged to finish summer assignments prior to course start if possible. Summer assignments are linked in the course description of each AP course in the [course catalog](#).

Advanced Placement: Testing

Students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses are expected to take AP exams. Students who are failing their AP class do not need to take the AP exam. Exam results do not affect the student's course grade or future enrollments. AP exams are not offered at our school headquarters. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy students must locate a site in their local area where they can take the exam. The

College Board provides information for homeschooled students that is helpful for our students. Be aware of the timeline for this process; the College Board recommends contacting their AP Services for Students number (888-225-5427 or 212-632-1780) in September to obtain names of local testing sites as exams must be ordered during the early fall.

Audit Request

Students that experience a hardship can request to audit a course (remain enrolled for the purpose of enrichment rather than earning credit). Audit requests should be made to the school counselor and will be approved after consultation about the impact of an audit on graduation or grade level progression. If an audit is approved, student access will be changed so the student can see content only; the student will not be able to communicate with their teacher or classmates. Access to the course will expire when the semester ends. Audited courses will be included in the student's transcript, with a notation that the course was audited and the student did not earn credit.

Course Change Requests

Students who wish to change the level of a course must file a support request so their school counselor or academic liaison can discuss the request with the learning coach. Changes in course level, as available, are allowed through the first term of a course. Decisions about appropriateness of the change are made on a case-by-case basis.

Course Enrollment

Course selection is a collaborative decision made by the student, parent/learning coach, school counselor, and school staff. Prior grades and transcript analysis are key components of the placement decision, as are math readiness assessments, as needed. A typical full-time student course load is 5.5 - 6 credits. There is flexibility for students to reduce course load if they receive credit for out of school experiences or an exemption for elective or physical education requirements.

Course Extension Request

Students will be allowed to finish work past the end of a semester only if there is an excusable reason for absence that prohibited the student from completing work on time. The student must work with your academic liaison and communicate with their teacher in the PT about the situation. Course extension requests are granted for up to one month from the end date of the course.

Excusable reasons for absence include illness or an accident that requires hospitalization, a traumatic event, a natural disaster or extreme weather event, a family emergency, or a concussion or medical condition that prohibits attendance from school. Reasons such as overall workload, motivation, studying for specific assessments or examinations at the local school, or sports and extra-curricular commitments will generally not be excused.

Course Failures and Repeat Credit

Students must earn a final grade of 60% or better to pass a course. Courses required for graduation must be retaken or remediated, depending on the student's final score. Students who pass a course (earn a grade higher than 60%) are not allowed to retake a course for a higher score.

Students who fail a course with a grade between 45-59% are eligible for course remediation using the credit recovery or summer programs. If a student fails the course with a grade lower than 50%, the course must be retaken in its entirety. Once the new course is completed, the grade from the second attempt will count towards the student's GPA. The failed course will remain on the student's transcript but will not count towards the GPA.

Course Levels

Each course is designated as standard, honors, or Advanced Placement. Standard courses are college preparatory level. The course description indicates course level and prerequisite skills. The following parameters can be used as guidelines for our courses:

- A standard (college preparatory) level class requires approximately 6 hours per week.
- An honors level class requires approximately 8 hours per week.
- An AP level course requires at least 10 hours of work per week.
- Credit Recovery courses require approximately 50 hours of work per 0.5 credit hour.
- Flexible courses contain similar assignments to the paced version of the course. Due to the self-paced nature of the program, students should expect to spend approximately the same amount of time per week as on a similar paced course. Students who start a Flexible course later in the academic year will need to increase their effort to finish the course by the June 15 deadline.

Given these expectations, students will spend at least 6 hours per day working on their coursework.

Course Offerings

As a full-time program of VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), Massachusetts Mayflower Academy provides students with the opportunity to enroll in any of the more than 200 courses in our catalog. In addition, we have evaluated courses from accredited partner providers if students require access to a course not offered in our catalog. Course descriptions, objectives, and requirements can be found in the [course catalog](#).

Document Formats Allowed

To ensure integrity of work and validity of grades, students must submit work in file formats that work within our plagiarism detection tool, such as text-based, Microsoft Word files or PDF files. Students may be asked to resubmit work that has been shared in a format that is not compatible with our plagiarism detection tool, such as scanned images, screenshots, or other image-based files that contain text.

Dropping Courses

Students under age 18 who wish to drop a course must have a parent/guardian submit the request, in writing, to the academic liaison or school counselor. The request must include the student's name, parent/guardian name, name of course to be dropped, and reason for the request. The request can be faxed to 978-897-9839 or scanned and emailed to the academic liaison or school counselor. School counselors review the requests and determine if the course drop will be approved. Until an official determination is made, students should continue working in their courses.

Failing Grade/Numerically Not Possible to Pass

We make every effort to support students who are struggling to be successful in our program. If there comes a time when a student is no longer able to pass a course, the following options are available. Dropping or auditing the course could affect graduation date; these options should be discussed with the school counselor prior to finalizing a decision.

- Drop the course to focus on other courses and attempt it again in a future semester.
- Remain enrolled in the course and remediate the failed grade in accordance with the Course Failures and Repeat Credit policy.
- Audit the course, according to the Audit Request policy.

Grades Over 100%

Teachers are not allowed to confirm grades over 100% in the Student Information System. If a grade is greater than 100% for a term, the grade will be confirmed as 100% in the system. Additional points may not be rolled over to a later term.

Grade Periods for Term and Semester Courses

Grade periods for semester-length courses (fall and spring):

Term 1 Grade: The Term 1 Grade represents student work from Weeks 1 through 8.

Term 2 Grade: The Term 2 Grade represents student work from Weeks 9 through 15.

The Final Grade represents an average of the Term 1 and Term 2 grades.

Grade periods for full-year courses:

Fall Term 1 Grade represents student work from Weeks 1 through 8.

Fall Term 2 Grade represents student work from Weeks 9 through 15.

Spring Term 3 Grade represents student work from Weeks 16 through 26.

Spring Term 4 Grade represents student work from Weeks 27 through 33.

Final Grade: The Final Grade for full-year classes is the average of Term 1, 2, 3 and 4 grades.

Flexible, Credit Recovery, and summer courses are graded in a single term containing work.

Grade Point Average (GPA) / Weighted GPA

Grade point average is determined by dividing the number of quality points earned by the number of credits attempted. Failed courses will be included in calculated GPA as attempted credit, unless the course is remediated according to the Course Failures and Repeat Credit policy.

GPA is determined using final course grades and is calculated once per year at the end of the academic year. Cumulative GPA is determined using all courses completed at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy only. Transfer credits, college courses, and credits taken with partner providers are not used to calculate cumulative GPA. To acknowledge the rigor and expectations of honors and AP classes, GPA will be weighted according to the table below.

Grade Scale and Quality Points

Numeric Score	Transcript Grade	Quality Points Standard	Quality Points Honors	Quality Points AP
97-100	A+	4.3	4.8	5.3
93-96	A	4.0	4.5	5.0
90-92	A-	3.7	4.2	4.7
87-89	B+	3.3	3.8	4.3
83-86	B	3.0	3.5	4.0
80-82	B-	2.7	3.2	3.7
77-79	C+	2.3	2.8	3.3
73-76	C	2.0	2.5	3.0
70-72	C-	1.7	2.2	2.7
67-69	D+	1.3	1.8	2.3
63-66	D	1.0	1.5	2.0
60-62	D-	0.7	1.2	1.7
50-59	F+	0	0	0
0-49	F	0	0	0

Grade Dispute Process: Prior to End of Course

If, during the semester, there is a question about the validity of a student's grade, the student should consult with their academic liaison and communicate with their teacher in the Private Topic to ask about the grade item in question and seek clarification about the situation. If the student is not able to resolve the issue the academic liaison will review the situation and will consult with the teacher of the course and an Associate Dean if necessary. Results of this review will be shared with the teacher, student, and learning coach and will be final.

Grade Dispute Process: Final Course Average

If, after final grades have been confirmed, it is determined that a student's grade is incorrect, the grade will be updated in the Student Information System so that the correct grade is reported on the transcript. The student should discuss their concern with their academic liaison as soon as possible following the end of the semester. The academic liaison will investigate the concern, consulting with the course instructor and Deans as warranted. The academic liaison will ensure the proper grade is reported to the Student Information System following resolution of the investigation.

If the student and learning coach disagree with the findings of the initial investigation, they can share additional information with the Dean by submitting a support request in the Service Center or emailing the academic liaison and requesting an appeal. The Dean will review the findings and will make a final determination in the matter.

Grade Level Promotion

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits to graduate. Students who fail one course each year will be allowed to promote to the next grade, so long as they have achieved minimum credit accumulation according to the following guidelines:

- to be considered Grade 10, student must have earned at least 5 credits;
- to be considered Grade 11, student must have earned at least 10 credits; and
- to be considered Grade 12, student must have earned at least 16 credits.

We will notify parents/guardians of students under age 18 that have not earned enough credit to progress to the next grade. Students will be allowed the opportunity to make up missed credits by completing a credit recovery course (when available) or beginning in the next available term, including summer.

Graduation Requirements

Subject	Years/Credits	Notes
English	4 years (4 credits)	
Mathematics	4 years (4 credits)	
Science	3 years (3 credits)	3 years lab courses required
Social Studies	3 years (3 credits)	World and U.S. History, and U.S. Gov't
Foreign Language	2 years (2 credits)	Same language
Health/Personal Finance	1 year (1 credit)	0.5 credit each
Physical Education	1 year (1 credit)	
Arts/humanities	1 year (1 credit)	
Electives	3 credits	
TOTAL	22 credits	

Honor Roll

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy will publish an honor roll at the end of each semester. To earn an honors designation, confirmed semester grades must be A or B in all classes. Students with grades of A in all classes will be designated as high honors scholars. The honor roll, including limited directory information, may be published in the monthly newsletter and will be reported to local media outlets for publication at the discretion of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy.

Incomplete Grades

Teachers may allow a student additional time to complete course work following the close of the marking period by issuing an Incomplete (I) for Term 1, 2, 3 or 4. If an excusable reason for absence exists, a student should talk with their academic liaison.

Teachers are encouraged to be flexible, especially when an incomplete is requested by a student's academic liaison or learning coach. Incompletes, and the time allotted to complete the work, are granted by the teacher after review of the student's reason for absence. The additional time allotted for the completion of incomplete work may not exceed two weeks from the close of the marking period unless there is a course extension approved.

An excusable reason for absence includes illness or an accident that requires hospitalization, a traumatic event, a natural disaster or extreme weather event, or a concussion or medical condition that prohibits attendance from school. Reasons such as overall workload, motivation, studying for specific assessments or examinations at the local school, or sports and extra-curricular commitments will generally not be excused.

The Dean will adjudicate disputes if the teacher and learning coach disagree about whether a student should be given an Incomplete. Learning coaches can request a review by filing a support request or communicating with the academic liaison.

Late Work

This policy applies to occasional late work (as described below). If a student has an excusable reason for absence that requires additional flexibility, the student and learning coach should communicate with the academic liaison as soon as possible. The academic liaison will work with the teachers to establish a schedule for turning in work late (without penalty) and will identify whether modification of expectations/assignments is required. Excusable reasons for absence include illness or an accident that requires hospitalization, a natural disaster or extreme weather event, a traumatic event, a family emergency, or a concussion or medical condition that prohibits attendance from school. Reasons such as overall workload, motivation, studying for specific assessments or examinations at the local school, or sports and extra-curricular commitments will generally not be excused.

The Extended Absence, Incomplete, and Course Extension policies provide guidance in these scenarios.

- Late work will be accepted up to one week after the due date with a penalty of 20%.
- Occasional late work is defined as missing one (or more) assignments in up to two weeks per term. If work is turned in late more than two weeks in a term the student must explain circumstances that prevented timely submission of work, or they will not be allowed to earn credit for the missing work.
- Due to grading deadlines, the late work policy for the final week of the semester is shortened from one week to three days. If a student requires more than three days past the end of week 15 or week 33, they must seek an Incomplete or Course Extension from the teacher in advance of the last day of the week. See the Incomplete and Course Extension policies for additional details.

- Discussion and group work assignments will not be accepted late unless confirmed circumstances made participation impossible during the scheduled week. Confirmation from the learning coach is required for this allowance.
- Students allowed to earn credit for late discussion/group work will receive guidance from their teacher regarding modifications to these assignments, which might include analysis of a discussion thread, identification of ideas missing from a complete discussion, or sharing applications of the concept discussed.

Extended Absence (7 or more consecutive school days)

This policy applies to students who are absent from class for an extended period (greater than 7 consecutive school days). Shorter absences are managed by the student's teacher and VHS Learning administration under the Late Work policy.

If a student misses more than 7 consecutive school days due to illness or injury, the learning coach should notify the academic liaison so the team can evaluate the situation and suggest an approach for supporting the student. Depending on the circumstance of the student's absence and the course, a variety of approaches are used, including exempting assignments, extending weekly deadlines, or extending the course end date (which would require hiring a substitute at an additional charge).

In general, an absence of up to four weeks in a semester-length class can be accommodated through varied approaches (as described above). If a student will be absent for more than four weeks in a semester-length course, they will be allowed to re-enroll in a future semester, as it is unlikely a plan will be able to accommodate for that length of absence in a 15-week course.

If a student is absent for more than four weeks in a year-long course, every attempt will be made to accommodate using the approaches listed above. This type of absence will likely involve a combination of approaches, including having a teacher continue the course past the typical incomplete period. Students who are absent for more than 8 total weeks in a year-long course will have missed too much of the course to be able to successfully rejoin the class.

Concussion

If a student has a concussion during their course, the learning coach must communicate the student's status and outline expectations for returning to full-time learning. The preferred method of communication is via email to the academic liaison or submission of a support request in the [Service Center](#).

The learning coach is a critical support for a student with a concussion. As soon as it becomes clear that the concussion will impact the student's ability to complete assignments on time, the learning coach is expected to provide the following information:

- course name(s)
- the student's "return to learn" status
- target date for return to full learning
- whether there are any global exemptions or expectations that have been requested by a doctor

Once supporting documentation, such as a medical note, is available, it must be uploaded to the student's profile in the student information system, to assist teachers in supporting the student.

Other Medical Issues

If a student is absent from school due to a medical issue lasting more than a few days, the learning coach must take an active role in communicating the student's status. The preferred method of communication is via email to the academic liaison or submission of a support request in the [Service Center](#).

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy requires verification of absence due to medical issues. A medical professional must provide a letter confirming the duration of time the student is excused from attending school. The letter does not need to contain specific medical information or a specific diagnosis, but it must include a timeframe for returning to school and any limitations on the student

Proctored Exams

Students are required to take proctored exams in course courses. Learning coaches are expected to act as the proctor for these exams to verify that students complete the exam without aids or other resources. The required documentation (proctoring form) is provided in the course. Students requiring accommodations (length, time allowed, etc.) must discuss these modifications with the teacher prior to the administration of the exam. There are no exceptions to the exam requirement; students who are unable to complete the exam during the required timeframe must discuss the issue with their teacher. Course grades are not finalized, and transcripts are not generated, without completion of all required proctored exams.

Student Orientation

Prior to beginning a course, students will complete Student Orientation, a self-paced module that provides an overview of course structure and navigation. In addition, each course contains a module entitled *Start Here*, which introduces general academic policies, provides tips for time management and organizing work, and explains additional elements of our courses.

Transfer Credit

To receive a diploma from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy, you must successfully complete at least one academic year of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy courses (5.5 credits). Students who wish to have credits earned at other institutions accepted for credit towards a diploma must provide official transcripts from other institutions. Students may be asked to provide samples of work to verify rigor of courses, especially in cases where the course name may not provide an adequate description of how the course content would meet our requirements.

Waiver Requirements

Some courses, including lab science and physical education courses, require students and/or their parent/guardian (if the student is under age 18) to sign waiver documentation and upload it to the course. Waiver requirements are outlined in the course description of the catalog. Waivers must be returned during Week 1 of the course. If you do not return the required waiver within the established timeframe, you will not be allowed to complete assignments for which the waiver is required.

STUDENT POLICIES (“Code of Conduct”)

Acceptable Internet and School Systems Use

All systems shall be used in a manner consistent with the purpose of the systems, the administrative rules for using the system, and according to school policies. Communications using system resources will be considered publications and will be governed by administrative policies and policies regarding publications.

You are expected to conduct yourself in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using our systems. You must not access material that is contrary to prevailing community standards or inappropriate for classroom use. If such inappropriate material is accidentally encountered, you must immediately stop use of that site or resource.

Access to our systems is a privilege, not a right. You have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of other users in the school community and on the Internet. Please act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, in accordance with school policies, in conformance with the purposes of the other sites they use on the Internet, and in compliance with state and national laws. If you commit a violation your access privileges will be revoked, as well as whatever other disciplinary action may be assigned by school administrators.

This policy cannot describe all possible behaviors by users of the system, so in any specific situation, you must exercise good judgment and appropriate conduct. To assist in such judgment, the following guidelines are offered:

- Any use for illegal purposes, or in support of illegal activities, is prohibited.
- Any use for political, religious, or commercial purposes is prohibited.
- The use of electronic mail in any manner that is contrary to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy policy is prohibited.
- Any use that disrupts the educational and administrative goals of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is prohibited.
- Any use of the system or a Massachusetts Mayflower Academy account by anyone other than the authorized owner of the account is prohibited.
- Any reproduction of copyrighted material without explicit permission is prohibited.

System storage areas may be inspected at any time. System administrators or other staff may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that students are using the system in a responsible manner.

You should not download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware unless you have written permission from the System Administrator or other appropriate staff. Do not keep other people's work or intrude into other people's files. All materials in courses are copyrighted and for use exclusively by the enrolled student. Enrolled students may print or photocopy material for their own use while enrolled, but distribution to others is strictly prohibited.

No profane, abusive, impolite, or inappropriate language should be used to communicate within Massachusetts Mayflower Academy systems and/or on the Internet.

Access or upload of material that has been deemed inappropriate for educational use is prohibited. Should you encounter such material by accident, please disengage immediately and report it to your teacher and academic liaison. In addition, creating and/or uploading any material that is inappropriate for educational use (text, video, images or other) is prohibited.

You must use your own username and password. Sharing usernames and passwords is strictly prohibited. You may not use another person's account. You are responsible for making sure your password is private and secure. Do not publicly share your personal contact information, or anyone else's, without express written permission. Unauthorized access to our web site, servers, and systems is strictly prohibited.

You are expected to communicate with one another respectfully in your online classrooms. No swearing, sarcasm, or hurtful comments will be accepted. You should be respectful of all classmates, focusing on classroom content and discussions. Always try to be helpful and constructive, not hurtful and destructive.

Attendance Policy

Courses run on a continuous, 15-week semester calendar. There is a break between fall and spring semesters, as indicated on the academic calendar. We recognize that there are times when students may be absent from class due to illness, family commitments, or other reasons. When issues that impact attendance arise, teachers and support staff work with the student to adapt the course schedule. In the case of planned absence of 3 days or more, students must notify their teacher and academic liaison in advance, to accommodate for that absence.

Due to the collaborative nature of our courses, successful students login and participate in class multiple days each week. Frequent or extended absences, as indicated by learning management system user progress analysis, may result in students being re-enrolled in a course in a future program, or withdrawn from the Academy altogether. These decisions are made by the Dean, in collaboration with VHS Learning staff members.

Self-paced courses are available to meet certain requirements. If these types of courses are required, the student must discuss the need with their counselor, so an individualized plan can be made to accommodate the request.

Verification of Attendance

Learning coaches are responsible for ensuring students are engaged with their learning each week. They should maintain a weekly log of time spent in class that, upon request, will be reviewed by school administrators. This document, along with user progress logs, are evidence of student attendance to ensure students are not truant from school.

Truancy

Student user progress, postings in class, and weekly learning coach attendance logs are evidence that students are engaged in their education. A student is considered truant if they fail to login and submit work to class for 7 consecutive days without notification to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy. In the case of truancy, the parent/guardian is notified of the absence and the fact that the student is in danger of being withdrawn from the Academy due to excessive absences. Upon parental notification, the student must return to class within 24 hours, or the student will be removed from the Academy. If the learning coach is not accessible a certified letter will be sent to the home address notifying the guardian of the attendance issue.

Copyright Notice

Your course might contain copyrighted materials that are used in compliance with U.S. Copyright Law. Under that law you cannot save materials to your computer, revise materials, copy materials, or otherwise distribute materials without permission. Materials accessed in your courses are to be used in support of the instructional activities for the course only and shall be limited to the duration of the course, unless otherwise specified by the instructor or owner of the material. You may only download or print materials if given permission by your teacher or academic liaison, who know which materials are copyrighted and which are not.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Submitting work that students claim as their own but derives from a source other than themselves without properly citing the source is considered plagiarism and is not allowed. There are serious consequences for students who plagiarize their assignments or discussion contributions.

We use Turnitin, a plagiarism detection tool, to detect if work has been copied from another source. Turnitin doesn't just search the Internet, it checks work against current and former student work in any VHS Learning course.

Our goal, in addressing cases of suspected plagiarism, is to ensure a fair, consistently applied process. If a teacher suspects an incident of plagiarism has occurred, the following will occur:

1. The teacher will investigate the situation with a member of the VHS Learning team and will communicate with the student in their Private Topic. This is an opportunity for the student to explain why they believe they did not plagiarize or to take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the source of the work.
2. If it is confirmed that the work you submitted was not original, the teacher will notify the student's learning coach and academic liaison. The incident will also be documented within an internal tracking document so that VHS Learning can gather information about the frequency of these events. The consequences that VHS Learning will use are as follows:
 - a. For a first incident the student will receive up to 50% credit for assignment(s) that are resubmitted within 3 school days of notification.
 - b. For second and subsequent incidents, the student will receive grades of zero and will not be allowed to resubmit assignments.

- c. In egregious incidents, the student may receive a zero on first offense or be withdrawn from the course with a failing grade, a decision made by the Dean or Associate Dean.
 - d. If a student is found to have plagiarized a response to a question on an exam, they will earn a score of zero for that part of the exam and will not be allowed to resubmit an answer to that question.
 - e. If a student is found to have shared work, but did not knowingly participate in a plagiarism incident, they will not be required to resubmit your work, but will be subject to a penalty of up to 20% off on the assignment in question. Future incidences will be penalized using the consequences outlined above (50% off and then no credit allowed).
 - f. In certain courses a student might be required to complete an alternate assignment instead of being allowed to resubmit the original work. VHS Learning will make a determination that will be shared with the student in their PT.
3. If there is a disagreement about whether the incident was plagiarism, a member of the VHS Learning team will investigate. The student and their learning coach will be notified of findings within 2 business days, assuming prompt response to our questions.
 4. Students can appeal a decision by speaking with their academic liaison and filing a support request so that a VHS Learning Dean can investigate. Findings of the Dean are final.

Respectful Discourse

Tone of voice and attitude can be difficult to convey in writing, but they are extremely important in an online class. It is important to say what you mean and mean what you say! We expect that you will treat your teachers and classmates with the same respect as you would treat your teachers and peers in any face-to-face environment. Students who are disrespectful will be subject to consequences aligned with our Acceptable Use Policy. Here are some specific reminders about respectful posting in an online course:

Use proper English: It is easy to fall into the habit of using texting shorthand. This is a classroom, just like any other classroom. Use proper English and do not use unusual screen names, slang, or abbreviations in your posts.

Choose words carefully: When we talk to someone in person, they can hear our words and see our faces. In classroom discussions it is easy to be misunderstood. Read your post back to yourself to make sure your word choices convey your feelings.

Don't make it personal: Expressing your opinion is encouraged, but don't make disagreements personal.

NO YELLING: Refrain from using all capital letters – it is like yelling at your teacher or classmate.

Keep it clean: No profanity, links to inappropriate websites, or inappropriate images.

Don't forget: all things you post in the course are recorded and saved, including edit history on discussion posts.

Social Media Platforms

Recognizing you might connect with classmates outside of your classes using social media, you are discouraged from creating groups in social media for the purpose of completing work in your classes. All discussion and group work must be completed within the learning management system to earn a grade.

Failure to Follow Code of Conduct: Penalties

Failure to follow our code of conduct guidelines may result in the following:

- Removal from courses and/or programs
- Suspension or expulsion from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy
- Legal and/or law enforcement action
- Forfeit of student tuition and/or fees paid

Note: Any activity in violation of local or federal laws is considered to also be a violation of the Massachusetts Mayflower Academy code of conduct.

Due Process

We believe the right to a quality education should not be infringed upon in any way. School administrators are here to help students if a problem should arise. All students are guaranteed due process. Except in the case of extreme infractions, such as felony charges, sexual misconduct, drug/weapons charges, and any other infractions that would jeopardize the safety of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy, students under consideration of expulsion from the Academy will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond and participate in a hearing before determination of suspension or expulsion. Written notice of the hearing will be provided to the student and parent/guardian with at least 48 hours' notice of the hearing. The following process will be used at the hearing:

- Student, parent/guardian, and administrators will convene in person or by video meeting. Parent/guardians can request the proceedings be recorded if they wish.
- Administrators will include Dean, Associate Dean(s), and Guidance Counselor.
- The Dean will review the cause for the suspension/expulsion, providing facts and evidence used to determine necessity of this action.
- The student will respond to the description of the incident, providing any relevant information to the administrators for consideration.
- The administrators will ask questions of the student.
- The parents will be allowed to make a statement, if desired, and can invite a member of the faculty to speak on behalf of the student, if desired.
- The student and parents will be provided with a timeframe for the results of the hearing and will be asked to adjourn from the session. They can meet separately with the Guidance Counselor if they have questions about the process.
- The administrators will deliberate and determine whether suspension/expulsion is warranted or whether more information is required.
- The results of the meeting will be delivered to the student and parents within 48 hours.

If the student and parents are not satisfied with the decision of the committee, they may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Dean of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy at 4 Mill and Main Place, Suite 510, Maynard, MA, 01754. The Dean has the authority to convene a review committee and review the decision at their discretion.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Administrative Oversight

We reserve the right to review all materials used and transmitted at the Academy, and through VHS, Inc. to oversee safety and determine that the materials are appropriate. Review may be done at any time, without notice, and may include emails, discussion postings, and other such communications. Academy policies are subject to change at any time. Students and families should refer to the most updated policy handbook for current policies and procedures.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

No student will be excluded from participation in the Massachusetts Mayflower Academy based on race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, nation of origin, or disability. Students applying to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy will be considered for admission based on academic record, potential for success in an online learning environment, and adequacy of support network for the student who will be working in the home environment. Complaints should be filed with the Dean, who will investigate any allegations of discrimination.

Anti-Harassment/Cyber-bullying Policy

We are committed to safeguarding the right of all individuals involved in the school to work and learn in an environment that is free of harassment. Students are encouraged to report any incident of harassment/bullying to their teacher and the Dean. Teachers witnessing cyber-bullying within their course and/or notified of harassment/bullying issues are required to submit a service ticket to notify school administrators within 24 hours.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying and acts of cyber-bullying for any reason, including but not limited to race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in any form is strictly prohibited. Anyone whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. Violators may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

“Cyber-bullying” is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
2. places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual’s property; or
3. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the course.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting by School Officials

Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 119, § 51A, requires that mandated reporters (which include private school teachers and administrators who “in his professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from: (i) abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare, including sexual abuse; (ii) neglect, including malnutrition; (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth,” shall immediately communicate with the department orally and, within 48 hours, shall file a written report with the department detailing the suspected abuse or neglect; or (iv) being a sexually exploited child; or (v) being a human trafficking victim as defined by section 20M of chapter 233.

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy faculty and staff follow the mandated reported guidelines provided by the Department of Children and Families found here: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/DCF/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>

Data Directory

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy abides by the Code of Massachusetts Regulations with regard to student information, specifically 603 CMR 23. We maintain limited directory information about students, including a student's name, hometown, dates of attendance, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. We will release this limited directory information when required to announce academic honors, student achievements, and graduation information. Students or parents who wish to not have this limited directory information released must inform Massachusetts Mayflower Academy before September 15 of each academic year. Notification should be emailed to: MassMayflower@vhslearning.org or faxed to 978-897-9839.

Data Security and Retention Policy

Cybersecurity Framework and Risk Assessment

VHS Learning uses a custom cybersecurity framework based on industry standards provided by a third-party contractor. Our systems are audited periodically for compliance and security improvements.

Employee Training

All employees must pass a criminal background check and be fingerprinted. Employees complete ongoing training on best practices for information security, data protection and privacy regulations.

Backups

Our systems are cloud-based and backed up daily in accordance with industry standards.

Destruction of Data

Our Data Retention timeframes are in accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts records retention laws and have been approved by our accrediting bodies. Partners with differing needs may amend their individual contract upon mutual agreement with VHS, Inc. Individual student records may be deleted upon request by the parent or eligible student, per FERPA guidelines.

Data cannot be recovered after destruction.

Data	Retention
Course transcripts	Indefinitely
Student data including assignment grades	5 years
Student assignment submissions and activity, communication, teacher feedback	5 years

All questions or concerns regarding our privacy or data retention policy should be directed to your Partnership manager or our Privacy Officer at privacy@vhslearning.org.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law enacted in 1974 that guarantees the confidentiality of a student's records. Massachusetts Mayflower Academy and VHS, Inc. adhere to FERPA policies and regulations.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day that VHS, Inc. receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the Chief Privacy Officer (privacy@vhslearning.org) a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask VHS, Inc. to amend their child's or their education record should contact the Chief Privacy Officer (privacy@vhslearning.org), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. 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 and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school

district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by VHS, Inc. to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Feedback on Course Content and Experiences

As a school that provides quality experiences and is committed to continuous improvement, we value your feedback. We seek feedback on our programs through our annual survey process. If a student or learning coach has concerns that need attention during the academic year, please speak with your academic liaison or file a support request in the Service Center so the information can be shared with the appropriate staff member for investigation and follow up.

Preferred Name Process

It is possible to update your name in VHS Learning systems if you are a student who prefers a name other than your legal name. This policy does not apply to nicknames; it is intended for students who request a different name because of gender identity or a cultural preference. To initiate a name change, speak with your academic liaison, who will submit a [support request](#) on your behalf.

Privacy Statement

Please visit <http://vhslearning.org/privacy-policy> to read our most current privacy statement.

Student Records

Student academic records are maintained for a period of at least 7 years following withdrawal or graduation date. Requests for copies of academic records must be made in writing. Parents/guardians of students under 18 should contact the office for information and a form to request educational records. A records fee may be assessed should printing and mailing charges be incurred.

Massachusetts Hazing Law

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy complies with the Massachusetts Hazing Law

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS 269:17, 18, 19

269:17 HAZING; ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING; HAZING DEFINED. Section 17.

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one, [sic] year, or both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

269:18 FAILURE TO REPORT HAZING. Section 18.

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

269:19 Copy of secs. 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report Section 19.

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team, or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams, or organizations shall not

constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its member, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communication the institution's policies to its students.

The board of regents and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

Technology Requirements

Our courses use the Internet as the primary vehicle for instruction. Instructors use a web browser for the delivery of courses and students use a web browser to access their courses. You must have Internet connectivity and have access to the Internet daily.

Courses may contain links to outside websites, and while every effort is made to maintain these links, we cannot guarantee that users following links from within a course will not encounter sites hosting malware or viruses. We strongly recommend all users install malware/virus protection from a reputable vendor, and make sure that the definitions are updated regularly to prevent infection.

Students can view lesson content, submit course assignments, and fully participate in most courses on mobile devices, including iPads, iPhones, and Android devices. Some courses use installed software and will not work on portable devices, unless students have regular access to a desktop/laptop computer for installation and use.

To view specific technical requirements that may be required for each course, review the course descriptions in the [course catalog](#).

VHS, Inc. Intellectual Property

All course materials are VHS, Inc. intellectual property and remain the property of VHS, Inc. They shall be used only for education of students as outlined in VHS, Inc. participation agreements. Copies should not be made, and content should not be distributed unless authorized in writing by VHS, Inc.

FLEXIBLE COURSE OFFERINGS

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy students can take full-credit, teacher-led, self-paced courses to meet graduation requirements. Flexible courses are taught by licensed teachers and contain nearly identical content to the paced, asynchronous version of the courses. You will progress through a Flexible course independently, working at your own pace. Flexible courses follow all VHS Learning and Massachusetts Mayflower policies, with some exceptions, as outlined in this section of the handbook.

Start and End Dates for Flexible Courses

Flexible courses will begin on the first day of each month, beginning in August. You can enroll through December 1 for AP courses and through February 1 for non-AP courses. All work must be submitted by June 15. Course access will be removed on June 30.

Extension Requests for Flexible Courses

The June 15 end date for Flexible courses will not be extended except in the case of an extreme illness where you are not able to complete schoolwork and have a doctor's note excusing you from attending school for a specified period (greater than 2 weeks).

Requests for additional time beyond June 15 must be submitted to your academic liaison via email or support request from your learning coach.

Minimum Enrollment Period for Flexible Courses

You must remain enrolled in a Flexible course for a minimum of 20 weeks before your grade will be finalized, and you earn credit for the course. If you finish the course assignments faster than 20 weeks, you will need to wait for the 20-week enrollment period to be complete before your final grade will be added to your transcript.

Pacing Guidelines and Expectations for Flexible Courses

You will receive a suggested pacing guide based on your start date. The deadlines in the pacing guides are suggested milestones so that you can work consistently throughout your enrollment period. You will not be penalized if you miss the target but should be mindful of the time remaining in the course if you do not stay on track with the suggested timeline.

You must complete the course in the order that the units are presented, unless your teacher or academic liaison tells you to skip some material.

You should submit work consistently as you progress through the curriculum. If you turn in large volumes of work at once, your teacher will not be able to return feedback within 3 days and likely will not be able to provide feedback before you move on to new material.

Grade Periods for Flexible Courses

All grades will be captured in a single term in the Student Information System. You will be able to monitor your grades throughout the duration of the course, however, an official grade will be issued once, no later than June 30.

Truancy Policy for Flexible Courses

Due to the self-paced nature of Flexible courses, the standard truancy policy does not apply. Your learning coach and academic liaison will receive updates from the VHS Learning system. It is expected that your learning coach will support you if you are not on track to complete the course.

CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM

Credit Recovery courses provide students with opportunities to complete courses in a more flexible manner.

Credit Recovery Course Pacing and Credit

Credit Recovery courses are designed for students that require flexible credit recovery and are motivated, independent learners. Courses are taught by licensed teachers and enrollment is available on a rolling basis. Credit Recovery courses are not approved for initial eligibility with NCAA.

Students progress through coursework independently can take up to 15 weeks to complete a Credit Recovery course, though many students complete the courses within an 8-week timeframe. Credit Recovery courses earn variable credit, based on the amount of content covered in the course. Visit the [Credit Recovery page](#) of the VHS Learning Website for additional details.

Credit Recovery Course Extension Request

If you have not finished a Credit Recovery course by the end of 15 weeks, you can request a two-week extension. To be eligible for an extension you must have completed at least 50% of the assignments in the course. Extension requests are submitted via the [Service Center](#).

Credit Recovery Course Partial Credit Request

Students are expected to complete all Credit Recovery content to receive credit for the course. Workload reduction is not possible, due to the abbreviated curriculum in each course. If you require only part of a Credit Recovery course your school counselor or academic liaison will provide instruction about what units should be completed.

Credit Recovery Course Tuition Refund

Credit Recovery tuition is refundable prior to the start of the class, less a \$25 administrative fee. No tuition refund will be granted after the start of the course. Please note that Credit Recovery enrollments

start within one day of registration, so the timeframe to receive a full refund is very small. You should be confident of your enrollment needs prior to enrolling in a Credit Recovery course.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Summer School Course Pacing and Credit

The VHS Learning Summer School program is a paced, cohort-based course experience that provides students with the opportunity to explore new material or earn credit recovery in an NCAA approved credit recovery program.

Courses are either 4 weeks long (0.5 credit course) or 8 weeks long (1 credit course). There are two sessions to choose from for the 4-week courses (late June and late July start). The 8-week courses begin in late June and end in mid/late August. Students are required to login to the class daily and participate in weekly class discussions. Summer school courses are taught by licensed teachers who assess student work and interact with students regularly in class discussions and the student's private discussion.

Visit the [Summer School page](#) for additional details about the summer program and course/registration information.

Summer School Extension/Incomplete Requests

You must complete all work for your summer school course within one week of the course end-date. If you are not able to complete work within this timeframe, you may enroll in the corresponding Credit Recovery course and finish the course at your own pace. An additional enrollment fee for the Credit Recovery course will apply.

Summer School Late Work Policy

Late work will be accepted for one week from the due date and a 20% penalty will be applied to work submitted within that week. Work submitted after one week will not be accepted without prior approval from the course instructor.

SUMMER, CREDIT RECOVERY, AND FLEXIBLE TUITION POLICY

Full-time students take 5 - 6 credits each academic year to maintain their status at Massachusetts Mayflower Academy. Students are allowed to use their tuition towards Flexible or Summer School courses according to the following guidelines:

- Students can take up to 2 credits of Flexible courses towards their 5-6 credits per year for no charge, with approval of the school counselor.
- Students can take up to 1 credit of Summer School courses towards their overall graduation requirements for no charge, with approval of the guidance counselor.
- Students who exceed the above credit limitations can enroll in Flexible or Summer School courses can do so at 75% of the individual student registration rates.
- Credit Recovery course enrollments are not included in Massachusetts Mayflower Academy tuition. Students requiring these courses for credit recovery will be charged tuition at 75% of the individual student registration rates.

PARENT INFORMATION

Welcome to Massachusetts Mayflower Academy! We are excited that your family has chosen to be a part of our school and look forward to helping your student achieve his or her educational goals. We hope you have read this handbook so you can understand the policies that guide our program. If you, or your student, have questions about our school or policies, please do not hesitate to call our office at 978-897-1900 or speak with your academic liaison directly.

Benefits of Massachusetts Mayflower Academy

Massachusetts Mayflower Academy is a program of VHS, Inc., established to ensure all students have access to a rigorous, flexible, college-preparatory high school experience. Though our school is still new, in our 25+ year history we have found that there are many benefits to experiencing asynchronous, cohort-based online courses.

Through exposure to our complete program of studies students have access to courses that allow them to discover a possible career of interest. In addition, our model encourages development of self-regulation, self-advocacy, and time management skills. Our class discussion boards give students time to think before posting their responses and offer an opportunity for all students to be heard. Exposure to students from across the United States and from a variety of international locations is also enriching, especially in courses that explore content where global perspective is critical.

Last, but by no means least, our program provides a safe way for students to take online classes. Our rigorous, but supportive courses are great preparation for post-secondary pursuits. Many colleges are using blended or online courses as part of their undergraduate programs. Our former students have shared that online course work in high school was beneficial to them in college.

Getting Help

We view the learning coach as a critical piece of your student's support system. After acceptance into Massachusetts Mayflower Academy each student is introduced to their academic liaison, a staff member who will be their primary point of contact throughout their time at our school. Academic liaisons are a support system for parents too! They can answer many of your questions about your student's classes. You will also be connected with a guidance counselor who will act as your primary point of contact for scheduling and all other student support questions. We are here to help make your time at our school successful – if you need anything at all please don't hesitate to ask.

Parent Advisory Council and Feedback

All parents are invited to participate in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), a group that will convene at least three times each academic year to solicit feedback on specific aspects of our school programs. In addition to the PAC, students and parents will be surveyed each academic year so that administrators can reflect on program quality and identify areas of commendation and of growth. As an organization with a long history of reflection and continuous improvement, we encourage feedback at any time. Simply use our [Service Center](#) to file support request or email our Dean (amichalowski@vhslearning.org) with commendations or areas of concern.