



The Nora School

Student, Family, and Community Handbook

Revised July 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Nora School is a small, college preparatory learning community that works to bring out the best in students with different learning styles. We help bright students who have become frustrated in school rekindle their enthusiasm for learning. Toward that end, the Nora School's environment is the responsibility of every member of the community. The ways we behave toward one another and take care of our school influence our lives here and help maintain an atmosphere in which learning is easier. We are as concerned with the way people get along together and the values we share as we are about earning good grades.

The Nora School believes in the capacity and responsibility of human beings to create a better world. Students need to make choices and develop their own sense of what is right and useful.

We hope that the school can help them make wise choices.

The Nora School works hard to develop ethical consciousness and behavior in the community and expects the families of the students to be equally committed.

No school can make a list of rules to cover every possible happening and its consequence. Students at Nora are expected to act constructively and responsibly toward others and toward themselves. The bottom line is, responsible people don't need rules, as they act out of kindness and consideration towards others and with responsibility for themselves. Nevertheless, some rules and guidelines can be helpful.

The rules of the school are simple and fair. Rules having to do with health, safety, and legal issues, as well as educational standards, are non-negotiable.

Any addendum to the Handbook are considered official additions to these guidelines.

There are four basic guidelines that will lead to student success at Nora. These guidelines are:

Show up on time

Do your work

Be kind

Take care of your health

Our handbook is organized along these guidelines.

THE NORA SCHOOL STAFF

Administration

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Faculty

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The Nora School actively seeks a diversity of backgrounds and talents among its students and staff. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, gender, race, disability, faith, national or ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, admissions and tuition/fee adjustment practices, staff hiring, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

Daily Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15	Building Opens	Building Opens	Building Opens	Building Opens	Building Opens
8:45-9:30	Period 1	Period 1	Period 1 (8:45-9:20)	Period 1	Period 1
9:30-10:15	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2 (9:20-9:55)	Period 2	Period 2
10:15-10:30	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting (9:55-10:10) Period 3 (10:10-10:45)	Morning Meeting	Meditation
10:30-11:10	Period 3	Period 3	Period 4 (10:45-11:20) Period 5 (11:20-11:55)	Period 3	Period 3
11:15-12:00	Period 4	Period 4	Period 5 (11:20-11:55) Period 6 (11:55-12:30)	Period 4	Period 4
12:00-12:45	LUNCH BREAK				
12:45-1:30	Period 5	Period 5	Staff Mtg.	Period 5	Period 5
1:30-2:00	Lab	Lab		Advisory	Lab
2:00-2:45	Period 6	Period 6		Period 6	Period 6

2:45-3:15	Office Hours	Office Hours		Office Hours	Office Hours
3:30-4:30		Sports		Sports	

On Wednesdays:

- Classes end at 12:30. Faculty meeting runs from 12:30 - 3:30.
- Community Service Day hours are group specific. Everyone serves 4 hours.

Show Up On Time

SCHOOL HOURS

The school building is open from 8:15 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Classes begin at 8:45 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. On most Wednesdays, school is dismissed at 12:30 p.m. On Community Service Wednesdays, dismissal time varies depending upon the group in which the student is working.

In case of illness, a parent or guardian, *not* the student, should send an email to attendance@nora-school.org. The school will make every effort to contact a parent in the event of a student's absence.

Students who need to arrive before the building opens or stay after the building closes are encouraged to wait at Kaldi's, a very nice coffee shop at the end of the alley on Silver Spring Avenue. The Silver Spring Library is also nearby, about a five-minute walk.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Delayed Openings: The Nora School follows the school closing policy, and a modified delayed opening policy, of Montgomery County.

* If Montgomery County schools are closed, Nora will be closed.

* If Montgomery County schools open two hours late, Nora will open **one** hour late, at 9:45 a.m.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar is an online Google Calendar. You can add it to your calendars by clicking the plus sign at norapride.org/portal.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not provide transportation for the students. There are Metrobus and Ride-On stops on the corner of Sligo Ave. and Fenton St., and the Silver Spring Metro Station is a five-minute walk from the school.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at classes, assemblies, community service projects, all-school trips, and all other school activities is required and is necessary for a successful program. Students are expected to be punctual and present for all their classes and activities. Attendance is officially taken at the beginning of First Period, and by teacher each period. Any student who arrives after class has begun must go to an administrator's office for a late slip.

When a student must be absent or late, a parent or guardian should notify the school by 8:30 a.m. A message by email to attendance@nora-school.org, before 8:30am. Please schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments for after school whenever possible. Please clear planned absences such as college visits, fairs, and political demonstrations with the office the day before the absence. Families of absent students will be telephoned if we have not received a message of explanation.

Attendance is taken during each class period, on all field trips and during emergencies. Any student who is missing during attendance will be considered missing. The parent will immediately be notified of missing students. Parents should attempt to reach the student by cell phone and inform the school that the student's whereabouts are known. The police will be contacted if necessary.

ABSENCES and CREDIT

If a student accumulates more than seven absences per quarter, he or she will lose credit for the entire quarter. Because of this generous allotment of absences, no distinction is made between excused or unexcused absences. A student may appeal loss of credit, but the teacher and the Head will determine the outcome of the appeal. Students can be reinstated for credit by doing a make-up project, but they can be reinstated only once per class per year. Seniors who exceed seven absences during fourth quarter may not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises.

A student is considered absent after 20 minutes of class.

Students who are habitually late or absent risk loss of credit, suspension, or expulsion. Exceptions to the absence policy will be made in cases of chronic conditions, serious illness, or hospitalization.

A student must bring in written permission from a parent or guardian in order to be dismissed during the school day for a special event, including political events. The parent or guardian may also e-mail or call the school ahead of time to give permission.

LATE POLICY

First period lateness:

Students are allowed three tardies per quarter per first period class without penalty. This allows for traffic, accidents, and other unforeseen events. Any lateness in excess of these three, for whatever reason be counted as 1/3 of an absence. Students can remediate a 1st Period Tardy by checking in with an administrator before 8:15 on any day of the same marking period.

Classes other than first period:

All tardies to classes other than 1st period are counted as 1/3 of an absence from that class. Tardies due to external circumstances, such as a restaurant's service, are unexcused. If a student comes to class late because of a conference with another teacher or counselor, they should bring a note from that person. A student cannot remediate a lateness to a period other than 1st period.

Late after lunch:

Students who return late from lunch must get a late slip before returning to class. In addition to the Tardy, students will also lose lunch privileges. The first time a student is late after lunch they will remain in the building for lunch the following day; students who are late a second day in the same quarter will stay in for one week; students who are late for a third day in the same quarter will stay in for the rest of the quarter, or for half of the subsequent quarter. Students who bring unfinished lunch to 5th period will be sent to the kitchen to finish lunch and will be considered late. *Students who are on Lunch Bunch but do not stay in the building are considered cutting.*

Do Your Work

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR & HOMEWORK

With a 6:1 student teacher ratio, classes at Nora are small, with no more than 12 students per class. Each teacher manages classroom behavior differently, and each may have different academic expectations. Those expectations will be made clear to the student. Homework is required, and any problems about homework are dealt with by the student and their teacher. Students are expected to behave in a mature, responsible manner, respecting the needs of the teacher and of their fellow classmates for an environment that is conducive to study. Cell phone use is not permitted during class. Music players and sketchbooks are generally not allowed in class; exceptions may be made by individual teachers for students with alternative learning styles.

OVERTIME

Teachers are available to students for extra help during designated times of the school day. Some students will be *required* to stay for Overtime. If more time is needed, arrangements should be made with the individual teacher. Students who do not stay for Overtime and are not in good academic standing will lose their lunch privileges.

EXAM SCHEDULE

At the end of the first semester, students take a midterm exam. Final exams are given in June. A special exam schedule is set for each exam period. The schedule includes makeup exams for students who are ill. These schedules will be mailed to families in advance of exam time; schedules are posted at the school for the students. See your school calendar for exam days.

GRADES

Grades and assignments are available online to students and parents on the school website. Parents and students will be given an access code and password to see overall grades and teacher gradebooks. Quarter grades emailed to parents at the end of each quarter, approximately every nine weeks. Two quarters constitute a semester. The semester grade appears on the permanent transcript and is calculated in the student's GPA.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS

Most Wednesday afternoons, we run on a half-day schedule with students dismissed at 12:30 p.m. One Wednesday a month, students attend their community service groups. There is no Overtime or Lab period on Wednesdays.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All students and faculty participate in the Nora community service projects. These monthly projects, focusing on a topic or topics of social significance, encourage a sense of care for our community,

empowerment by taking action, and competency in our students. Students should plan on spending the equivalent of a full school day at their community service site. A student who is absent for community service must perform a minimum of 4 hours of service within the month at one of the Nora School sites, or interims, grades, and transcripts will be withheld.

Seniors complete their 32 hours of community service on their own, either in the summer before their senior year, or during their senior year. These independent hours all seniors the monthly Wednesdays free for college purposes.

OTHER ALL-SCHOOL TRIPS

There are times when all Nora students will be expected to participate in off-campus activities. Some of these are museum or adventure trips, others are community service activities. All school rules apply during these trips. Attendance is expected and make-up work will be assigned to students who are absent.

GRADUATION

Graduation is a special time for seniors and their families, as well as for the whole school. A \$800 senior fee is charged for all seniors to help defray the costs of the Senior Retreat, college counseling, and the graduation ceremony, including the cap and gown, invitations, speaker, and diplomas.

To graduate from the Nora School, a student needs to earn 24 credits prior to graduation. In order to be considered

- A **senior**, Nora students must begin the school year with 18 credits.
- A **junior**, a student must begin the year with 12 credits.
- A **sophomore**, a student must begin the year with 6 credits.

A credit consists of a minimum of 120 classroom hours.

A graduate must also complete the requirements of the senior year, which include

- The senior retreat
- 32 hours of community service performed during their senior year prior to May 1,
- A presentation of the Senior Portfolio,
- Other senior class programs.

The credit breakdown of courses needed for graduation consists of:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Sciences (including 2 lab sciences)
- 3 Social Studies (including U.S. History)
- 2 World Language
- 7 Arts & Humanities

- Students must also participate in **one sport** during their tenure at Nora.

Seniors who exceed seven absences, and thus lose credit, in any class during 4th quarter may not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises. Students who fail a course in the last semester of their senior year may not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises. The Nora School does not award diplomas prior to completion of the senior year program.

COLLEGE COUNSELING

The Nora School is a college-preparatory school, and makes available a curriculum which offers students the opportunity to go to a wide variety of colleges, universities and other post-secondary experiences, including Americorps and other service-oriented programs. Seniors have the opportunity, along with their parents, for one-on-one counseling and support of the application process from our college counselor. In addition, all seniors go on a three day, two night trip to various area college campuses, during which they work on their college essay and perform other aspects of self-exploration as part of this retreat. The Parent Education series also offers speakers on various aspects of the college acceptance process, including schools for students with LD's, financial considerations and other topics. The school also offers a "How to Do College" workshop for all seniors at the close of their senior year.

CUTS

A cut is a class or school activity missed without permission is a rare occurrence at The Nora School. Students must never leave school during break or class without permission from an administrator. Student cuts result in suspension, loss of credit, loss of lunch privileges, assigned groundskeeping work, or a combination of these consequences. Students who leave school without permission or who do not return from lunch are considered to be cutting. Students are not allowed to make up work missed due to a cut.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

It is expected that students at The Nora School will conduct themselves in an ethical manner not only in relationships with one another, but also in academic matters. Students are expected to work hard, prepare for exams in a timely manner, turn in papers and other long-term projects on their due dates, and ask their teachers for help if they are having trouble. If a student does these things, issues of academic honesty will not arise.

Nora is a college preparatory school. As such, part of the school's mission is to prepare students with the skills necessary for independent college life. This includes having students read independently, do homework, write research papers, and take formal exams. Part of college academic life is learning how to do this work independently in an ethical and honest manner. The Nora policy is based on the honesty code of several universities, and is designed to give students a clear idea of what is and is not allowed at the college level, as well as a clear idea of the consequences of academic dishonesty at the college level.

Academic dishonesty is defined as using another person's work without attribution, copying another student's work, or using materials during a test that have been banned, or not explicitly approved, by the

teacher. If a student has a question about the meaning of this, they should clarify their understanding with the teacher well before the homework, paper, project, or exam is done. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: writing a paper that does not cite and attribute material that comes from another source, copying homework, turning in a paper written by another person, or using crib sheets or notes during an exam (unless the teacher has given express permission to use such sheets or notes).

The penalty for academic dishonesty is as follows:

- The person who copied another's work or otherwise cheated will receive a grade of "0" on the assignment, the annotation "PL" will be added to the assignment grade on Gradebook. This letter denotes plagiarism. The "PL" will not appear on the semester grade, nor on the transcript.
- The person who allows their work to be copied will receive a grade of "0" on the assignment, and the annotation "PL" will be added to the assignment grade on Gradebook. This letter denotes plagiarism. The "PL" will not appear on the semester grade, nor on the transcript.
- Repeated problems with issues of academic honesty may result in dismissal from Nora.

Questions about any aspect of this policy should be asked prior to any thought of violating it. It is not expected that issues of academic dishonesty will arise often, but the school's position is clear – it is not acceptable and will be dealt with forcefully.

SUSPENSION

Students may not make up any classwork, homework, or other assignments done in class while suspended. Long-term projects, papers, labs, tests, quizzes, can be turned in with whatever late penalty applies.

Be Kind

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL STYLES

Students at Nora wear widely varied clothing. However, students should not wear clothing or adopt styles that are sexual, violent, alcohol- or drug-related, or that may otherwise make others uncomfortable.

RESPECTING STUDENT'S UNIQUE IDENTITY

The Nora School strives to foster a climate of purposeful inclusion of all people. We value the diversity of racial and cultural identity, sexual orientation, gender identity and its expression, religious background and belief, family structure, mental and physical health, political perspective, and class status.

Twice a year in advisory, we will ask each student to describe some aspects of their identity, including the name and pronouns they use. We will do our best to address students in class, on report cards and in the school database according to their request.

TELEPHONES

Cell phones must be off & away during class time. Use of cellular phones during class time will result in these devices being taken by the teacher and left in the office for a parent to pick up. Students may use cell phones or office phones before and after school, or during lunch. They may not use phones in between classes or during the Lab period. Office phones should be used to call parents during the school day, and parents should call the office to communicate with their children. As well, parents should call the office to contact students. Unless specifically requested by a teacher, cell phones are not allowed in class. Students may be required to drop off their phone at the beginning of the school day should it be too big a distraction.

Music player and the use of earphones or other technology that may be distracting are generally not allowed in class; exceptions may be made by individual teachers for students with alternative learning needs. Laptops that are being used for non-class related activities may also result in the consequences above.

Non-technology uses in the classroom of sketchbooks, doodling, knitting or other activities are to be used only with the teacher's permission, and as long as it is not distracting to the student's ability to participate or concentrate or is felt to be distracting to others, among other considerations. When permitted in general, students will be asked to put them away when the teacher deems appropriate.

CARS

The school parking lot is reserved for faculty, visitors, and the school vehicles. The least expensive student parking is at the nine-hour meters in the parking garage next to the school or at a meter along Sligo Avenue. Cars must not be parked in the alley, or extend into the alley, or block entry into our

parking lot. Fire equipment must always have unrestricted passage through the alley and to our building . The county issues \$50 tickets for obstructing that passage.

Parked cars may not be used as smoking areas.

LUNCH

Students should request permission to leave the school building during break or class. We do, however, have an open lunch policy. No lunches are provided at the school. Students are free to use the kitchen facilities to prepare their own lunches, provided they clean up any mess they have made in the process. With parental and school permission to drive or to ride in student cars, students may leave the school to buy lunch. They must return to school in time for their next class or this privilege will be revoked. Students go out to lunch at their own risk. It is their responsibility to return in time for class having already eaten lunch. Lunch should not be brought to class but left in the kitchen refrigerator.

Our school building and neighborhood must be left clean at the end of lunch. Eating is permitted only in the kitchens, the student lounge upstairs, the downstairs atrium, hallways, or in classrooms when teachers have given explicit permission. Students who cook at school and those who go out for food and then bring it back to school must be careful to leave the classrooms, yard, parking lot, and nearby streets clean following their lunches. Students should only eat what they themselves bring to school. Food and containers left in the refrigerator will be thrown away each Friday at 3:00 pm.

Lunches brought in by students should be labeled. Designated equipment or other requirements requested for religious reasons will be accepted by the student body.

SMOKING/VAPING

Smoking or vaping is not permitted at The Nora School, nor is it allowed in the neighborhood within two square blocks of the school. Students found smoking/vaping will be required to call a parent and will be assessed a fine. The fine is \$50 for smoking/vaping in the neighborhood within two blocks of the school. The smoking/vaping fine must be paid on the day following the violation, or the student will not be allowed to return to school. Students who hang out with smokers/vapers run the risk of a smoking fine, as it is not a teacher's or neighbor's job to distinguish which members of a group are the actual smokers. Continuing violations of the no-smoking/vaping policy, or any violation that causes ill will with residents of the neighborhood, will result in suspension or dismissal from Nora.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The Student Government Association (SGA) plans activities and works with program coordinators and administrators on ways to improve school life. When students break rules or act in other ways which interfere with the well-being of the community, they may be asked to meet with SGA Peer Mediators or an administrator to discuss the offense.

AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS POLICY

All school rules apply at all official parties, games, camping trips, field trips, and visits to other schools for athletic events, Field Days, etc. Specific rules may be announced by the chaperones of an official event – for instance, insisting that people arrive on time for a class trip to a play or that people return to a hotel at a specific time during an overnight trip. In addition to this, the school is responsible for the students' health and educational program. If matters arise that affect these considerations, or the reputation or well-being of the school as an institution, then these matters become the concern of the school even when these matters happen outside of school hours. This applies to any illegal activities, misuse of social media, or other occurrences that might reflect seriously upon the reputation of the school or upon other students.

LANGUAGE

The use of profane language in class or in the school creates a non-professional community that can be uncomfortable for others. Use of language which is insulting, demeaning, or cruel is unacceptable. Students may be fined from \$1.00 to \$5.00, at the discretion of the teacher, for using profanity. Student fines must be paid immediately or the student will serve an in-school suspension during lunch. Use of inappropriate language, including threats, put-downs, or vulgarity, will result in serious consequences, including having students call parents, a parent conference with the head of school, suspension, or expulsion. Students are reminded that Nora is a safe environment where any violence, including verbal, is never condoned.

BUILDING

Students are expected to treat the school as they would their living room at home. They should not write on walls or desks or handle furniture carelessly. Parents will be held financially responsible for any damages incurred, including repairs made necessary by graffiti. Graffiti cleanup costs a minimum of \$100 per incident. Drywall repairs will be billed to the responsible student's family.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Students may not congregate in the alleys, parking garage, or near other private businesses near the school. In our neighborhood the school must work hard to earn a reputation for helpfulness and good manners. Parking in the alley, smoking in cars, leaving trash by the side of the road is neither helpful nor polite, and will lead to disciplinary action. Smoking within two blocks of the school will result in a smoking fine.

THEFT

Taking another person's possessions, including food from the refrigerator, is an act of theft, and may lead to expulsion from the school.

TECHNOLOGY

Nora uses Chromebooks licensed to The Nora School for all classroom activity.

Nora computers run Windows and recognize most Flash Drives, which students are encouraged to use. *Work cannot be saved on school computers, as they are wiped clean for viruses and spyware every night.*

Use of the computer labs, NoraNet, Internet, and other school resources are for educational uses only. While it is impossible to document all appropriate conduct and use of the computer facilities, the following guidelines provide examples of computer and network use that are not permitted:

- 1) System tampering (altering of the operating systems, individual accounts, software, networking facilities, desktop settings and/or other programs) and/or equipment damage
- 2) Decrypting passwords and/or gaining unauthorized higher level access or privileges or attempting to do so
- 3) Interfering with other users
- 4) Making statements or actions that are libelous, slanderous, or harassing
- 5) Using language, pictures, or other material that is obscene, vulgar, or abusive
- 6) Knowingly introducing viruses or attempting to do so
- 7) Reading, deleting, copying, forging, or modifying the e-mail of other users or attempting to do so
- 8) Permitting others to use one's personal e-mail address, account, or password
- 9) Using commercial advertising, chain letters, or non-educational games
- 10) Copying or transferring copyrighted materials and software without authorization
- 11) Posting personally identifiable information about students or faculty without authorization
- 12) Using the NoraNet or computers for personal gain or any illegal activities
- 13) Printing that is not for school use.
- 14) Using proxy servers to access inappropriate websites.
- 15) Using social networking sites, such as Facebook, in or out of school, to post derogatory or otherwise inappropriate information about other members of the school community.
- 16) Playing games, instant messaging, blogging, or otherwise socializing

Violation of these guidelines will result in the student not being allowed to use school computers or internet access. Serious cases will result in suspension or expulsion.

FACTS

Students and parents will be given a FACTS account. This is where students and parents can track grades and attendance, and find, turn in, manage, and store assignments. Students are expected to check FACTS daily, and to refer to this website when absent before emailing teachers.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOS

Acceptance of admission, *unless otherwise requested in writing by a parent*, allows photographs taken during school classes, assemblies, or other school activities to be used in school publications and/or on the school web site by school personnel. No other use of images is permitted.

Students should have permission from every individual photographed before taking any photos during the school day.

Students may not record videos or sound recordings of classes or events during the school day or on school trips.

HARASSMENT POLICY

Nora is committed to providing a comfortable and encouraging learning environment for all students. The adults in the community support tolerance and respect between students, between staff, and between students and staff. Disrespectful behavior is unwelcome, and interactions that are offensive will not be tolerated. Unwanted attention, particularly sexual attention, whether serious or joking, is a serious form of disrespectful behavior. At Nora, where students may be the only gender in a class, event, or activity, it is especially important that everyone treat each other with respect, so all students have an equal opportunity to live, learn, and succeed in a supportive, friendly, and comfortable atmosphere.

Title IX is the law that makes sexual harassment illegal in schools. According to federal and state laws, sexual harassment is a form of discrimination. It is defined as: "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sex, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature if they occur as a condition of employment or advancement, or if such conduct had the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment."

Some examples of harassment and sexual harassment are:

Verbal Harassment: Foul or offensive language; jokes of a sexual nature; suggestive comments; sexually degrading words to describe someone; repeated flirting with someone who is not interested. General harassment includes cruel language toward or about another person.

Non-Verbal Harassment: Sexually suggestive objects or pictures in books, clothing, or magazines; suggestive or obscene or insulting sounds, whistling, leering, gestures; graffiti or other writings or music of a sexually or otherwise insulting nature.

Physical Harassment: Unwanted contact which may include touching, pinching, wrestling, hugging, or brushing up against someone's body.

To be considered harassment or sexual harassment, the action must be offensive to the recipient or to others in the area. Harassment and sexual harassment includes both intentional conduct and actions which were not intended to harm someone.

If you are being made to feel uncomfortable by someone in this way, tell that person to stop, and tell a Nora teacher so you can get some help and action can be taken. If you witness someone else being harassed, be supportive to that person and encourage her or him to get help. A student who harasses or sexually harasses another will be counseled by the faculty and head of school. Repeated offenses will be grounds for suspension and expulsion.

WEAPONS

No weapons of any type are permitted under any circumstances.

FIGHTING

Physical violence is not permitted and will not be tolerated. Cruel behavior and threats, in person or on social media, may be considered fighting.

Take Care of Your Health

SERIOUS COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

In the event that a Nora student or employee develops a serious communicable disease, the school administration should be promptly informed of the diagnosis and kept informed about the progress of the treatment. The school may require any student or employee who has been told that he or she may have or has a serious communicable disease to have a definitive medical diagnosis. The school will keep in strict confidence, subject only to the requirements of law, all information it receives from any source regarding Nora students or employees who have a serious communicable disease. Should a student or employee contract a serious communicable disease, the school reserves the right to evaluate its response on a case-by-case basis, with professional advice. The school will undertake an educational effort to inform its students, teachers, and parents about serious communicable diseases, in general, and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), in particular.

DRUG POLICY

The Nora policy on drugs is drawn from a belief that drug use is an issue of health, not of morality. We believe that people who use drugs are neither bad nor good, but that they are engaging in behavior that is physically, emotionally and intellectually unhealthy. Our drug policy is based on the concept that for Nora to be an environment where learning and personal growth are possible, drug use cannot be accepted.

We believe that drugs can cause serious damage to anyone who uses them, and believe that this is particularly true for teenagers. When a person is using drugs, emotional growth stops, and problems and challenges are avoided. Drug use, including alcohol and any form of marijuana, lowers motivation, causes loss of memory, loss of concentration, and loss of reasoning and analytical skills. These effects in turn cause poorer school work, less involvement in activities, and less interest in any world except the drug world. Drug use distorts teenagers' perception of their loss of academic and social interests. High school students who use drugs are harder to interest, use little initiative, and care less about their families and non-drug using classmates. Their time becomes increasingly organized around their drug use.

Drug use decreases openness, trusting, and connection between members of a community like ours. Because drugs are illegal, secrecy envelopes the people who are involved with them. Families, students, and the school are hurt: hurt if drug use is discovered, and hurt if it is not.

At Nora, no drugs, including alcohol and all forms of marijuana, are allowed. Evidence of drug use will be dealt with severely. No paraphernalia is allowed in school, and students are instructed to stay out of alleys and backyards. If we suspect drug use may be contributing to a decline in a student's performance, we will inform parents of our concerns. If we suspect a student is under the influence of any substance while in school, we will have a parent come to take the student out of school until a drug test is performed.

We offer three levels of intervention for a student who uses drugs and wishes to remain a part of the Nora community.

1) We first require a drug test, which needs to be performed on both a student's blood and urine. Urinalysis alone has not been, in our experience, an accurate method of determining a student's drug use. We require that the drug test be one that shows exact levels, not simply positive or negative results. For a student who tests positive for drugs to remain at Nora, he or she must have weekly, unannounced drug tests, alternating between urine and blood, with a copy of the results provided to the school. The student must also see a therapist to work on any underlying reasons for the drug use.

2) If the student continues to use drugs, as shown by the exact levels of the substance that show up in the drug test, he or she must enter an outpatient substance abuse treatment program at a local hospital, and provide the school with proof of attendance, as well as continue with the first level of interventions.

3) A student who can still not remain sober must enter a residential treatment program in order to remain enrolled at Nora. The school will work with the hospital to ensure that academic work remains on track.

If, after these three levels of intervention, a student is still not committed to sobriety, a more therapeutic school than Nora must be found. Alternatively, once the student demonstrates to the satisfaction of parents and the school the ability and commitment to remain drug free, the school will no longer require the drug tests as a condition of remaining enrolled at Nora.

It is the family's responsibility to have the tests done and the results forwarded to the school. Parents will be given a schedule for when the results are due. If the school does not have the test results by the due dates, the student will not be allowed to attend school until the results are provided.

We reserve the right to expel students who bring drugs to school or are found using drugs or bringing paraphernalia to school. A student who is providing drugs to others is damaging the entire community and will be expelled.

We believe that these steps are compassionate and are the best way to ensure the health of students and the Nora community. We will help any student who asks for help and will stand by any student who is trying to gain sobriety.

Outside of school, parents have the primary role in ensuring that their children do not become involved with drugs. By providing homes that are safe havens where drugs and alcohol will not be available, by supervising parties at their homes, and by checking to see that supervision will be available at other families homes, parents can help ensure their child's safety.

Our children are wonderful, bright, sensitive and usually sensible kids, but they can find themselves in situations that are beyond their emotional control. As mature as they sometimes may seem, they still need our help, our boundaries, our guidance, and our experience to help them weather this rocky passage called adolescence. We know that parents welcome a strong and clear message about our drug policy. We hope that you and your child will continue to help us keep Nora a place where learning and personal growth occur.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Due to allergy and other safety concerns, no animals are allowed on school grounds for any reason, save with approval by administration. Exceptions may be made for educational purposes when animals are the responsibility of staff or visiting lecturers, or in the case of trained service animals for students with physical needs. Comfort animals and pets, even when restrained, are not allowed.

PEER MEDATION

Peer Mediation at the Nora School is designed to teach students peaceful ways of resolving their conflicts and living up to their ideals without involving administrators.

Issues of health, safety, legality, or serious disciplinary action are not part of the Peer Mediation mission and are dealt with by the Head of School.

<p>RULES FOR FIGHTING FAIR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the problem. 2. Focus on the problem. 3. Attack the problem, not the person. 4. Listen with an open mind. 5. Treat a person’s feelings with respect. 6. Take responsibility for your actions. 7. Mediation Ground Rules: 8. Be willing to solve the conflict. 9. Tell the truth. 10. Listen without interrupting. 11. Show respect. No fouls. 12. Carry out your agreement. 	<p>FOULS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blaming 2. Name calling 3. Threats 4. Put-downs or bossing 5. Making excuses 6. Not listening 7. Getting even 8. Bringing up the past 9. Sneering 10. Not taking responsibility
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These rules work at home, too!

If Things Aren't Working Out

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Before any serious disciplinary action is taken, the community must consider:

1. How is the student doing academically and socially?
2. How much is the student apparently gaining from and giving to the well-being of the community?
3. How often has the student been in "trouble"?
4. How many times has help been offered to the student and his/her family?
5. What impact will the disciplinary action have on the school as an institution, the other students, the student himself or herself, and the family?
6. Is there any recourse not examined which might take the place of and be as beneficial in all ways or some ways as the course of action presently being discussed? In other words, especially in the case of expulsion, is there any way we have not thought of that will be as effective as expulsion or suspension?
7. How does the student's behavior reflect on the school community, other students, and the school's reputation in the wider community?

EXPULSION

Excessive absences, constant rudeness, endangering the health or well-being of other students, fighting, use of drugs or alcohol, stealing, or general disregard of school policies may result in expulsion. The school is the sole determinant of grounds for expulsion. Nora works hard to develop ethical consciousness and behavior in the community and expects the families of the students to be equally committed.

Nora School Emergency Plans

In the event of the following emergencies, Nora will follow the procedures listed below.

Overnight Snowstorm

If Montgomery County Schools are closed, Nora is closed. If Montgomery County Schools open TWO hours late, Nora opens ONE hour late.

Snowstorm during the School Day

Administrators will **not** follow Montgomery County but will use their best judgement about sending students home early in the event of a snowstorm during the school day. Thus, Nora students may be dismissed *prior* to Montgomery County making a decision. Every attempt will be

made to have the student contact a parent or other emergency contact before allowing them to leave school. *If a parent would prefer a student to remain at the school in the event of a storm, this should be noted on the emergency contact form.*

Hurricane, Tornado, or other weather related event

Administrators will not follow Montgomery County, but will use their best judgement about sending students home early in the event of a hurricane, tornado, or other weather related event during the school day. Nora students will be kept in the building until the tornado passes, or may be dismissed prior to Montgomery County making a decision in the event of an approaching hurricane. Every attempt will be made to have the student contact a parent before allowing them to leave school. *If a parent would prefer a student to leave immediately, or to remain at the school, in the event of a storm, this should be noted on the emergency contact form.*

Terrorist Event or other national emergency

Based on the level of the emergency, the Nora School will take the actions listed below. While it is impossible to predict every possibility, within these broad guidelines it will be possible to determine where to find your child. In any of these events, parents have the option of picking up their child immediately from school. In the days following any event, Nora will follow Montgomery County as to when school will reopen.

Level 1: An incident in another part of the country that does not affect the Washington metropolitan area. Students will be kept in school for the normal school day, and be kept informed of events. They should plan on their usual mode of transportation home. After school activities and sports will be canceled that day.

Level 2: An incident in another part of the Washington metropolitan area. Students will be kept in school for the normal school day, and parents can plan on them traveling home by their normal mode of transportation at the regular time. Parents who wish to pick up their children are encouraged to do so. Parents who want their children to leave school immediately should contact the school. If Metro is shut down, students who use that mode of transportation will be kept at school until picked up by a parent, or until other arrangements have been made. No student will be dismissed from the school until a parent or emergency contact has been contacted.

Level 3: An incident that affects downtown Silver Spring. If it is safe to remain in the building, students will be kept in the building until picked up by a parent, or until receiving permission to leave. Students may be sent home immediately with parental permission as noted on the emergency form. If it is not deemed safe to remain in the building we will walk down Sligo Avenue, away from downtown Silver Spring, to the Sligo Avenue Park at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Sligo Avenue. If we must evacuate the Sligo Avenue Park, we will transport students in the school van and teacher cars to the Juanita E. Thornton/Shepherd Park Neighborhood Library, 7420 Georgia Ave NW, Washington, DC 20012. We have made arrangements for emergency cell phone lines to be available to students.

Appendix A: STUDENT TRIPS - Day and Overnight

I. RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. All regulations for in-school behavior which can be logically applied to the trip will be in effect, including all regulations in the Student/Parent Handbook of The Nora School (hereinafter known as "Nora" or "the school").
- B. No student, regardless of age, is permitted to attend any school function, on or off school property, if evidence exists that the student is under the influence of an intoxicant. Therefore, possession, purchase, and/or drinking of alcoholic beverages of any kind, and purchase, possession, and/or use of drugs (other than those reported by parents or guardians in writing to the Head or Assistant Head for medicinal purposes) will result in the following actions:
 - 1) The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to pick their child up immediately from the trip site.
 - 2) If hospitalization is required, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to travel to the trip site and arrange for medical treatment. The school and the chaperones will bear no legal or financial obligation.
 - 3) If arrested, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to travel to the trip site and arrange for legal counsel. The school and the chaperones will bear no legal or financial obligation.
 - 4) Chaperones will be reimbursed, by the parent(s) or guardian(s), at the rate of \$50 an hour for time spent with the student who has violated the rules on drug and alcohol possession/purchase/use. This includes time with the student prior to the parents' arrival.
- C. Any student who is on suspension on any day(s) of the trip will not be permitted to go on the trip and will forfeit all monies.
- D. In order that other guests may enjoy their stay, each student must follow the curfews set by the chaperones.
- E. Students are not to be in possession of fireworks.
- F. Everyone going on the trip must be in school on the last school day prior to departure.
- G. In the interest of maintaining the good name and integrity of The Nora School, it is expected that all students will conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times.

- H. Any student who is taking medication of any kind must report this to the Head through a parental letter no later than 24 hours prior to the beginning of the trip.

WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY

- I. It is agreed that in case of accident, resulting in personal injury to any student during the trip, the school and chaperones will not be held legally liable.
- J. In the event of illness or family emergency which would require that a student be sent home before the termination of the trip, the student will be sent home by the best available means of transportation, accompanied by a chaperone if possible. If it is not possible to send a chaperone with the student, it will be the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to make arrangements for transportation home.
- K. In the event of hospitalization or other problem which would require a student to be sent home after the termination of the trip, it will be the parent's or guardian's responsibility to go to the hospital and/or make arrangements for transportation home.
- L. Financial responsibility for any transportation required (both student and chaperone) will rest with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student involved.
- M. Part II.B. is superseded by Part I.B. should those circumstances exist.

STUDENT NEEDS

- N. Transportation will be arranged by the school. Student drivers are NOT permitted.
- O. Specific wardrobe needs will be suggested for each trip.
- P. Students are to report to arrival and departure sites, with luggage tagged and name prominently displayed, at the times listed on the itinerary. All luggage, including overnight bags, must be checked by the chaperones before boarding busses or planes. Chaperones, hotel security, and transportation personnel have authority to inspect luggage at any time.
- Q. The group will travel together and must remain together except during leisure periods. Students are requested to travel in groups of three or more - do NOT travel alone.
- R. Students will be given an itinerary listing all events and times. Students are to make certain that they are on time for all events, especially departure times. Before leaving busses, cars, airplanes, and/or rooms, students must check to see that no papers or personal belongings are left behind.

CHAPERONES

- S. The school will designate chaperones to take full charge of the students and all details of the trip from the time of departure to the time of return.

- T. It is agreed that the chaperones will have full control of the movements of each student. In the case of difficulty with any student, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. This may include restriction from participation in scheduled activities.
- U. If a disciplinary problem is deemed to be extremely serious, the student(s) may be sent home, accompanied by a chaperone if possible. If it is not possible to send a chaperone with the student(s), it will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to make arrangements for transportation home. The parent or guardian of the student will be financially responsible for this transportation, both student and chaperone.
- V. If a chaperone must take a student home, the chaperones will be reimbursed, by the parent(s) or guardian(s), at the rate of \$50 an hour for time spent traveling with the student.
- W. Students should understand that chaperones are present to help them. If students have questions about meals, accommodations, or itinerary, they should ask one of the chaperones. The chaperones are also present to help students to avoid possible problems; students should feel free to call upon them for help at any time.
- X. The chaperones will not permit a student or group of students to spoil the trip for everyone else.

ROOMS, TENTS, AND CAMPSITES

- Y. Students assigned to a room, tent, or campsite are responsible for anything which happens. The cost of missing items (towels, etc.) and/or damage to the rooms, furnishings, etc. will be shared equally by those who occupy the room unless the responsible person(s) assumes the responsibility.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- Z. Disciplinary action taken while on the trip may be followed by further disciplinary action upon return to school.

PERMISSION FORMS

- AA. Permission forms signed at the start of the school year may cover most trips.
- BB. Additional permission slips may be required by the activity sponsor, depending upon the nature of the activity.

Appendix B

Students' Expectations of Themselves and their Peers at the Nora School

We expect people to be open minded,
...friendly,
...sensitive to other people's feelings,
...honest,
...non-judgmental,

...respectful.

We expect people to stand up for others.
...to treat others the way they want to be treated, ...to work to create the environment they want.
...to think about the consequences of what they say,
...to respect each person,
...to challenge cruelty,
...to help each other follow these standards,
...to take responsibility for themselves,
...to end gossip,
...to acknowledge other's ideas and viewpoints,
...to treat everyone with dignity and basic human respect,
...to respect and value people's differences,
...to listen,
...to admit mistakes,
...to participate in community life.

(Developed by the Student Body, 1994-5)

What it takes to be successful at Nora.

- Show Up On Time
- Do Your Work
- Be Kind
- Take Care of Your Health

- 1) The student must have a serious desire to do things differently than they've done things in the past, and to be open to change in her or his life in academic or other ways.
- 2) The student must be intellectually capable of doing college preparatory level schoolwork.

- 3) The student must be mature enough to see connections between actions and consequences, freedom and responsibility, and to act appropriately.
 - 4) The parent(s) must support the Nora mission and be willing to help the school, as a partner, to assist their child.
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Important Information in addition to this Handbook

The Nora School sends out weekly newsletters to inform our community of weekly activities and any changes to the calendar or schedule that may apply.

The Nora School maintains the most updated calendar on our Google Calendar, which you can add to your account at norapriderg.org/portal. Information can be found on our website, nora-school.org, and weekly updates are sent via email.

Past weekly newsletters can be seen at nora-school.org. Scroll to the bottom of the home page.

In general Nora tries to align major vacations and holidays with the Montgomery County Public Schools. Nora also follows a modified MCPS inclement weather schedule.

Notes, Comments, Questions:

The essence of our effort is to see that each child has a chance.

We aim to assure each child an equal opportunity, not to become equal, but to become different - to realize whatever unique potential of body, mind and spirit he or she possesses.

The Nora School
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nora-school.org
College Code: 210962