



Student and Family Handbook

Semester 75-76

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Welcome

You are about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime! The Maine Coast Semester team will partner with, challenge and support you in a curriculum inspired by the power of the natural world, human connection, and personal growth. The daily, immersive, sensory learning that comes from living close to the elements and to each other is real. Every semester writes its own story, and you will play an important role in that writing, one that will be filled uniquely by you.

This Student and Family Handbook is our “field guide.” It describes our norms, expectations, rules, and policies and is the go-to source for information about day-to-day life on the ground at Chewonki Neck. Students and families should read it carefully as it will help you prepare before you come to Chewonki and serve as a reference for building our community once you arrive.

Introduction

About Us

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki is a journey taken by students and teachers together. As unique individuals, we come together on this peninsula to engage – as colleagues and collaborators – in an extended conversation about our relationship with the natural world and our relationship with our community.

By working hard both physically and intellectually, by embracing the struggles and rewards of living in this intentional community of learners and workers, we become increasingly self-confident and mature; we learn to live well with others; we clarify our values and sharpen our intellect, and we become better observers of the world around us. As Joy Harjo says, “We each make our own map, and it is informed by those who came before us and those who surround us now.”

At Maine Coast Semester, we believe that communities must be nurtured to achieve their full potential through the care, energy, and goodwill of all members. Honesty and direct communication are essential to the health of our community, as is a passion for fully embracing the spirit and standards of Maine Coast Semester. It is through these paths that mutual trust is achieved.

At its best, our community is joyful, warm, receptive to new ideas, and welcoming to all persons. Individually, each of us values hard work; we understand that we are responsible for our own actions and that together, we can achieve great things. We travel to the Maine coast to live, as Thoreau said, “deliberately.” And when our journey ends, and our community disperses, we leave knowing that we have lived fully and learned deeply.

Chewonki Foundation Mission

Chewonki inspires transformative growth, teaches appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenges people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives.

Our Commitment To Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion

To meet the promise of our mission, we strive to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. Our legacy of thoughtful self-reflection and purposeful change guides our efforts to create a place where all participants and staff can flourish. We are committed to:

- Promoting the principles of social and environmental justice;
- Cultivating a leadership culture that fosters the best practices of this work;
- Building our financial strength to ensure the durability of this work;
- Attracting and enrolling students and campers who reflect our nation's diversity;
- Attracting and retaining staff who reflect our nation's diversity;
- Providing relevant, rigorous professional development;
- Designing a campus that is responsive to many needs;
- Evaluating our progress on an ongoing basis; and:
- Collaborating whenever possible with peer institutions to share knowledge and resources.

We are engaged in a sustained effort to transform Chewonki into a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist organization and school, one that is committed to addressing the historical and entrenched inequities that prevent us from reaching our full potential as a place of teaching and learning.

At Maine Coast Semester, we work on inclusion across our curriculum – in classes and residential life and beyond. We are learners in this work, constantly shifting and growing our approach as we learn, listen to our community, and adjust to our ever-evolving landscape.

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki Vision

We choose to approach rigorous academics, physical work, and everyday living with responsibility and joy. Whether engaging in a spirited classroom discussion, harvesting tomatoes for our table, or planning Saturday night's activities, we live each day deliberately to connect the individual to a larger community. Our students leave Chewonki with strengthened ownership for their education, an awareness of their place in nature, and an understanding that they can make a positive difference in the world.

Goals For Graduates

Our Goals for Graduates were crafted using the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, giving students the opportunity to develop empathy and awareness as they grow in the following areas:

- **Engaged Learning**
Students learn in a holistic way and address complex issues with humility, critical thinking, and creativity.
- **Community Involvement**
As responsible community members, students intentionally engage with a breadth of perspectives to promote social and environmental justice within and across communities.

- **Effective Communication**
Students listen with openness and discernment, and communicate ideas with clarity, creativity, and an awareness of impact.
- **Sense of Place**
Students build an understanding of their reciprocal relationship with the natural world through focused observation and reflection.
- **Sense of Self**
Students explore and affirm their identities, strengths, and areas for growth, and understand how these impact the various communities of which they are a part.

Contact Us

Office Phone Numbers

Your first line of inquiry is always your child's advisor, whose contact information you will learn before the start of the semester. Should you wish to reach another department during our regular business hours, and for non-emergencies, please call Chewonki's main line at (207) 882-7323. Our [full staff directory](#) can be found online.

Here are the contacts of our administrative team:

Sarah Rebick, Director, srebick@chewonki.org

Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 2211

Direct Line: (207) 656-5822

Julie Barnes, Associate Director and Chaplain, jbarnes@chewonki.org

Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 2203

Direct Line: (207) 656-5809

Chewonki Health & Wellness Center, health@chewonki.org

Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 5300

Direct Line: (207) 656-5869

Confidential Fax Line: (207) 882-9564

Admissions Office, admissions@chewonki.org

Justin Fahey, Director; Carter Ramquist, Associate Director

Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 5501

Direct Line: (207) 656-5885

Kathryn Zumstein, Registrar / Administrative Assistant, kzumstein@chewonki.org

Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 2002

Direct Line: (207) 656-1434

After-Hours Emergencies

If there is a critical reason to reach us after business hours reach out to the Director or Associate Director via the contact information listed above.

Community Life

Overview

Since 1988, Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki has delivered a hands-on, immersive, residential college-preparatory semester program to ambitious high school students from around the country with a focus on place-based experiential learning and a commitment to community and environment. Maine Coast Semester is a program division of Chewonki, whose century-old learning landscape has built a foundation and reputation of authenticity, trust, and connection to place and people. The Maine Coast Semester curriculum supports and challenges students to become the people they want to be in the world by offering opportunities to learn from all aspects of daily life.

During Maine Coast Semester, students live communally in cabins – separate from faculty members – and play a significant role in supporting one another and building community. This unique residential environment requires that students uphold and live out high standards outlined below. Our collective safety depends on this commitment. We talk directly about how each person impacts the experience of others and the whole. The ideal of Chewonki – a community in which responsibility and trust are reciprocated – remains strong across the decades and continues to offer an opportunity for transformative growth, as students become contributing members to a community of peers and adults.

Advising Program

The Advising program is the built-in first line support system for students. Advisors provide each student with a trusted adult with whom they can reflect in an ongoing way on their Semester experience. Advisors support and encourage each advisee to take full advantage of opportunities at Maine Coast Semester for personal and academic growth individually and as member of this community. Each advisor has a small number of advisees (2-4) so that weekly personalized check-ins are possible. Some of the roles advisors play are:

Student Advocate: Advisors develop positive relationships with each advisee and take an interest in his/her program so that they can represent the best interests of their advisees. Students can expect to meet with their advisors on a weekly basis and sometimes more frequently.

Resource Link: Advisors problem solve with advisees to encourage their self-directed solutions. In addition, they encourage positive risk-taking and self-advocacy skills, helping students develop action steps or connect to additional resources for support if needed.

Communication Link: Advisors make contact with the student and family ahead of Semester and in an ongoing way to discuss any concerns. Advisors facilitate smooth communication on behalf of advisees and families throughout the semester.

The Great Expectations And Community Standards

We ask every individual to commit to upholding these Great Expectations and the accompanying Community Standards at all times as they form the foundation for each Semester to thrive. When you sign our community agreement you make a promise to every other community member that you are invested in living up to them.

The Great Expectations

The Great Expectations are grounded in the core values that guide all of our actions in community life and support us reaching both our Goals for Graduates. Students repeatedly report that learning to live in a close-knit, trusting community is one of the most transformational aspects of their Maine Coast Semester experience. Our Great Expectations create the container for this learning, community and transformation.

1. Our program is grounded in mutual trust and the integrity of every member is vital. Cheating, plagiarism*, or dishonesty in academic or residential settings will not be tolerated. We expect honesty. (*See our stance on AI in "Technology.")
2. Because we value health and wellness, the use or possession of illegal drugs and alcohol is prohibited. Note: It is illegal to possess tobacco, cannabis, alcohol and vape products in the State of Maine if you are under twenty-one. Chewonki is a non-smoking campus.
3. Our community is founded on respect for place and resources. No stealing or damaging property.
4. Respect for each member of the Semester is vital to the success of our community. Harassment of any kind (eg. religious, racial, ethnic, sexual, sexual orientation, political, or socio-economic) has no place at Chewonki. This includes overt acts of physical assault, as well as unwelcome touching or sexual advances, suggestive remarks, verbal abuse, graffiti, epithets, or biased humor.
5. In order to maintain an inclusive and safe community within the particular context of a semester school, sexually intimate or exclusive relationships are not allowed. They can have damaging or unintended consequences for the health, safety, well-being, and privacy of our students, and conflict with our community values.
6. Student safety is of utmost importance. Students may not leave campus without permission; while on campus students must use the sign-out process when leaving the core campus.
7. The success of cabin life is built on trust. Students must stay in their cabins after nighttime check-in, and may not visit other cabins outside of visiting hours. Students may visit the restrooms in the night within the spirit of this rule, e.g. for a true need.
8. Uphold the community spirit of Chewonki. What makes Chewonki a unique and powerful learning community is the time we spend together: in class, at meals, in the cabin, working on chores, in the dish room, or on a work program. We expect students to support each other in these endeavors and contribute meaningfully and with a spirit of generosity to the group.

We regard these Great Expectations with the utmost seriousness. They are carefully crafted to promote trust, physical and emotional safety, mutual respect, and require the full participation of every person.

Any student who disregards any of the Great Expectations will be held accountable and can expect the response to include a thoughtful restorative process and consequences which may include temporary or permanent separation from the community.

Community Standards

Our Community Standards are rules that support the health and well being of our community in logistical and daily ways. Consistent adherence to these standards is essential.

1. Be on time to all classes, activities, meals and meetings.
2. Know and follow cabin rules so that we can enjoy our time together.
3. Respect and participate in study hours as an agreed-upon time of quiet on campus so that you may work, read, reflect, and support others in their academic endeavors.
4. Abide by our technology and digital resource use policy which includes no phones and using the Chewonki wireless network appropriately. This policy allows us to focus on the people and time we have here.
5. Only enter and use buildings designated for semester use.

See the section on residential life for more details about these rules.

If a student struggles to adhere to our community standards, that student can expect to have a conversation with their advisor or other adults to create a support plan. If trouble persists, a student can expect to be held accountable and for a response to include a restorative process and appropriate consequences.

Additional Health And Safety Rules

1. Attend all meals and adhere to all health and safety protocols during meals. (If you have specific dietary needs, our kitchen team is eager to work with you and support your nutritional health and well-being.)
2. Students should not enter the kitchen without adult supervision.
3. Students must always wear shoes when outside, unless you are walking on one of our manicured lawns (e.g., the Quad). Closed-toe shoes must be worn when in the kitchen and dish room as well as on the farm and during work program.
4. To protect our forest resources, do not light open fires without supervision from a faculty or staff member.
5. Do not climb trees above head height.
6. Know and follow waterfront guidelines to safely enjoy our coastal location. Do not enter the water or mudflats without staff or faculty supervision.
7. Know and follow guidelines for safe use of personal pocket knives, which we incorporate as tools for crafts, fire prep and living in the natural world. Knives must be signed in upon arrival to the Art Room, and used following our knife and sharps policy, found in the appendix.

8. No piercing or tattooing of any kind, including, but not limited to, stick-and-poke tattoos while attending Maine Coast Semester.
9. Always wear a helmet when riding a bike. Always wear reflective vest when biking or running at dawn or dusk. Follow all bike use and storage rules and only ride on roadways or trails north of the farm.
10. Students are not permitted to have cars on campus.

Please note that our discipline process and incorporation of Restorative Practices is described in detail further on in the manual, please be sure to orient yourself to these pieces of our program.

Before You Arrive

Pre-Arrival

As you prepare for your time at Maine Coast Semester [please see the latest communications from our school](#) leadership team, admissions office, and Health and Wellness Center, which we store in one place on the website for easy reference. We will share a number of logistics before opening day, including up-to-date protocols and travel requirements for you and your family. Paying close attention to these communications will help you play your essential part in creating a safe learning environment for all.

Transportation To And From The Chewonki Campus

On Arrival Day, Departure Day, and around Thanksgiving and spring breaks we support families with transportation logistics with clear communication and organization, whether families drive their child to/from campus or take public transportation.

We will arrange Chewonki shuttles to and from the [Portland International Jetport \(PWM\)](#), the Portland Transportation Center (a [bus](#) and [train](#) station with connections to Boston Logan Airport), and the Brunswick Visitors Center (has connections to [bus](#) and [trains](#) to Portland Transit Center) at the start and end of vacations and the semester, provided that students travel within the bounds of our shuttle schedule (see travel surveys linked below for times). The shuttles park just outside of baggage claim and have the list of students scheduled to take the shuttle. Maine does not have the shuttle or taxi services you might find in Boston, New York or other major cities. As you make travel arrangements (especially around vacations), plan accordingly to travel within reasonable hours to be on the Chewonki shuttles. On the Monday afternoon returns from Thanksgiving and spring breaks, it is important that students flying into Portland arrive no later than 4:00pm. In the past, we have seen students traveling from afar stay with local Semester classmates around these travel dates or coordinating shuttles with classmates. **If your child is arriving/departing outside of reasonable hours, you may choose to hire a cab service such as [National Cab Maine](#), [Portland Airport Express](#), or Brunswick Taxi ||(207-729-3688) which have been used previously by students.**

Please remember that you must have a government-issued picture I.D. for air, bus, and train travel.

Here are the links to the [Semester 75](#) and [Semester 76](#) travel surveys. You can begin filling these out before semester begins, and complete them as your plans evolve. We will send travel confirmation emails several weeks before each arrival/departure.

Should students or families encounter delays on the day of travel, please call our on-duty phone for updates and support: **(207) 504-3511**

Driving Directions

We are located one hour northeast of Portland. From South Portland, follow I-295N (splits off from I-95) to Exit 28 for Brunswick and Bath. This will put you on Route 1. Follow Route 1 through Brunswick to Bath. About six miles north of the Sagadahoc Bridge in Bath, turn right onto Route 144 (look for “Norm’s Used Cars”), and then right again just past the railroad tracks onto Chewonki Neck Road. Go past the airport and

the Chewonki Campgrounds (not connected with us). Continue past our sign until the road turns to dirt and takes you to our visitor parking lot. Please note: visiting dogs are not permitted on high traffic days including semester Opening Day, Family Day, and Closing Day.

Places To Stay In The Area

Please reference our website for the latest updates on [Lodging and Dining in the Wiscasset area](#).

Clothing & Equipment List

At Chewonki, you have an opportunity to simplify your life. One way to achieve this is to limit the “stuff” that you bring and use daily; remember that you will be living in a one-room cabin with 5-7 of your peers. Most of your attire can be informal and should enable you to live, learn, and work comfortably in both built environments and the outdoors. As you pack, keep in mind seasonal changes. Students in both semesters will experience temperatures and conditions that range from summer (70° - 90° F ±) to winter (0° - 25° F ±).

Put your name on all your clothes and equipment and bring all of the required items with you at the time of your arrival. We do not take students off campus to purchase additional clothing or equipment. Although students may receive packages at Maine Coast Semester, we strongly encourage families to plan ahead and avoid ordering additional clothing or equipment after the beginning of the semester. We ask students to limit online shopping during the semester, both to uphold our mission of being a sustainable community and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement that establishes our commitment to promoting equity.

You will do your own laundry on campus one day each week; knowing and planning for this ahead of time may help in packing. Chewonki provides detergent, and there is no fee to use the laundry facilities.

Clothing Expectations

Though we do not have a formal dress code, we ask that clothing be presentable and respectful of others while in classes and representing Maine Coast Semester. Our 400-acre campus features a farm, forest and woodlot, meadows, marsh, rocky coastline, and several miles of hiking trails. Students spend a great deal of time outdoors in all weather conditions, including rain and snow. Pack accordingly. Jeans or the equivalent are appropriate for most daily activities. Work program also necessitates that you bring clothes and gloves that are durable and can get *very* dirty. A headlamp is a must-have for moving around campus in the early mornings and evenings. Please also bring one nice (or semi-formal) outfit for special events.

Storage

Students live in one-room cabins with 5-7 other peers. For storage of all clothing, school supplies, and gear, each student has two medium-sized bookcases (waist height) with four-to-six shelves, as well as space under the bed. Some students bring a trunk or containers to keep underneath or at the foot of their bed. Most beds have 17” of clearance underneath for storage; some have 13”. A labeled mesh bag for laundry is also useful.

Required Outerwear

- ☐ Warm winter parka (lightweight down or synthetic-fill “super layer”)
- ☐ Waterproof rain jacket
- ☐ Waterproof rain pants
- ☐ Warm thermal or fleece layer for underneath

- ☐ Work pants – jeans, cotton duck, or canvas (many students choose to bring heavy overalls)
- ☐ Insulated and water-resistant snow pants (required for spring semester)
- ☐ Warm fleece or wool gloves that are flexible enough to wear when writing
- ☐ Warm shell mittens that fit over gloves (and/or heavyweight ski gloves)
- ☐ Lined leather or canvas work gloves
- ☐ Hat with a brim
- ☐ 2 wool or synthetic ski hats (of two weights or warmths)
- ☐ Balaclava, buff, or warm scarf
- ☐ Sunglasses (Additionally, ski goggles are optional for winter trips)
- ☐ Bandana(s)

Required Clothing

- ☐ Two weeks' worth of everyday clothing and underwear (*note: students do laundry one day each week.*)
- ☐ Several pairs of warm, wool socks (in addition to everyday socks)
- ☐ Two warm wool sweaters or fleece jackets that can be layered over shirts and t-shirts
- ☐ Two sets of long underwear (non-cotton), top and bottom
- ☐ Long-sleeved work shirts (flannel, wool, or denim)
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ One "semi-formal" outfit for special events (*and note that thrifting is encouraged*)
- ☐ Optional – costumes or the like for weekend evening activities (i.e. skits, coffeehouses, theme dances)

Required Footwear

Although there are boardwalks near the center of campus and some gravel pathways, students should expect to encounter wet, muddy, snowy, and cold ground conditions on a regular basis. Classes frequently meet on our farm, hiking trails, and coastline. During science field lab, students typically visit rocky and sandy beaches, bogs, brooks, and marshes. Students will be outside in all weather conditions, including the snow and rain.

- ☐ Everyday shoes, sneakers, running shoes, sandals, crocs, etc.
- ☐ Sturdy hiking boots for rugged terrain and variable weather conditions (water-resistance helps)
- ☐ Rubber boots such as rain boots or insulated bog boots
- ☐ Water shoes or old sneakers you don't mind getting exceptionally wet or dirty for polar bear dips and other water/mudflat activities. Must cover entire foot and fit securely (crocs and backless sandals do not comply)
- ☐ Insulated winter boots (ideally, with removable felt lining)
- ☐ Slippers or slipper socks for wearing inside your cabin
- ☐ (Some may bring slides to wear to/in the shower, though shower floors are clean and this is optional)

Required Cabin & Outdoor Items

- ☐ Headlamp and additional batteries (or charging cord if it's rechargeable)
- ☐ Warm bedding and linens – twin-sized sheets, blankets, pillow (light cotton mattress pad optional)
- ☐ Towels for showering (a large towel is a good idea if you are inclined to do polar bear dips)
- ☐ Two water bottles (approximately 32 oz. each)
- ☐ Battery-powered alarm clock AND wrist-watch (not Wi-Fi enabled)
- ☐ Toiletries to last four months (natural/biodegradable preferred) and shower caddy
- ☐ Sunscreen and chapstick
- ☐ Bug-spray

- ❑ Optional – A small mat or rug (~2'x3' or smaller) for wiping feet before getting into bed

Required School Supplies

Note: we do not have a school store on campus.

- ❑ School or government-issued photo I.D.
- ❑ Pens, pencils, and highlighters
- ❑ An assortment of supplies for taking notes and organizing course materials for six classes: a combination of 3-ring binders, folders, spiral notebooks, composition books, and looseleaf paper
- ❑ Graphing calculator (if you are taking math)
- ❑ Durable book backpack; you may also bring a hiking daypack for science field labs and day hikes

Additional Items Required For Spring Students

- ❑ Notes from the fall semester classes you will be continuing at Maine Coast Semester, e.g. language, history, and math (these will be useful to look over as you learn new material and prepare for any Advanced Placement® exams you may be taking)

Outdoor Skills Gear

Chewonki provides the following outdoor gear (so you do not need to bring the following):

- Personal shelter (tarps, rope, hammocks, mosquito netting for hammocks)
- Backpacking backpack and/or dry bag
- Sleeping pad
- Cross country skis, boots, and poles; snowshoes; paddles; PFDs
- Sleeping bag*

*A note on sleeping bags: *If you have your own favorite sleeping bag, feel free to bring it. Here are specs for the sleeping bags we'll send you out on trips with: cold-weather sleeping bag, rated to 15 or 20° F for fall or 0 or 5° F for spring, that stuffs into a **small** sack. If you are a "cold sleeper," you may want a synthetic fleece sleeping bag liner.*

Optional Other Items

This is not a shopping list but offers context for the types of things to bring.

Recreational Gear: We have these items on hand to use; however, you may choose to bring your own.

- ❑ Binoculars
- ❑ Digital camera
- ❑ Art supplies (art materials will also be provided by Maine Coast Semester)

Welcome things to bring:

- ❑ Musical instruments (any and all encouraged if you're a musician or an aspiring musician!)
- ❑ Crafting materials, such as embroidery, knitting, crocheting, etc.
- ❑ Recreational and sports equipment (tennis racket, lacrosse stick, xc skis, ice skates, hockey stick, etc.)
- ❑ Books for pleasure reading or games (*note: we do not support offensive or derogatory games, e.g., "Cards Against Humanity."* We are eager to engage in dialogue about being an inclusive community and why such games do not align with our ethos.)

A Specific Note On Cell Phones

- In keeping with our philosophy of valuing in-person connection, we do not allow student cell phone use on campus. This offers a refuge in today's world. Please note that while there is no need to bring a cell phone, a phone is useful for traveling home, so many students bring phones. Student phones are collected on day one and securely stored throughout Semester.

Please do **not** bring or acquire the following items while enrolled in Maine Coast Semester:

- Alcohol, tobacco products, vaping products, cannabis, or any illegal drugs. (They are major violations.)
- Personal Wi-Fi enabled devices (like laptops, iPads, iPods, Apple watches, tablets, Kindles) or devices with screens with stored movies or video games. Non-wifi enabled Kindles and music players are allowed.
- Large stereos
*A note on music: In cabins, personal, non-internet-capable music-listening devices like mp3 players with stored music are allowed. Each cabin will have access to a radio for local stations.
- Hot pots, appliances, or electric blankets
- Tapestries or other cloth wall hangings are not allowed as they are a fire hazard. Posters and photos are ok.
- Firearms
- Pets
- Candles or incense
- No area rugs larger than 2'x3' (small mats to wipe feet before getting into bed are OK)

Sourcing Items

Clothing, equipment, and footwear that students bring to campus will be well used, so we recommend durable items that can stand up to Maine's rugged landscape and variable weather. There's a saying that goes "there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing." As our program is focused outdoors – sometimes in inclement weather – it is essential that clothing and gear keep people warm and dry. At the same time, we recognize that the brand recognition of high quality outdoor clothing can feel like a social dress code, which may feel exclusive. Our recommendations for gear attempt to balance time-tested quality and function, company values and environmental philosophy, and cost. It's an on-going dialogue that we invite our participants to join. Several quality brands offer gently used and repaired items on their websites. *Buying used is both an environmentally friendly and pragmatic approach to outfitting yourself for the semester.*

Used gear can be found at local thrift shops and online at:

- [Patagonia Worn Wear](#)
- [REI Co-op Used Gear](#)
- [The North Face Renewed](#)
- [Outdoors Geek](#) - Organization that offers rental gear

Packing Questions?

Packing for a four-month semester in an unfamiliar climate can be challenging, so if you feel unsure of what to pack please don't hesitate to call the admissions office at (207) 656-5885. We also maintain a robust [Flickr](#) account with photos of daily life, work program, farm chores, science field lab, and other activities. Some families find these images helpful when deciding what to pack.

Pre-Semester Reading

Required Reading

We are excited to welcome you to Maine Coast Semester and to introduce you to your pre-semester reading assignment: **Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass***. The **purpose of this pre-semester reading** is to begin our time together with a book that provides a preview of the themes that will be introduced in many of your courses and fieldwork. We hope this will set you up for a successful semester.

Themes within the text include:

- Human relationships with the more than human world
- The ways our lives and culture are shaped by:
 - Stories we tell
 - The interplay of different ways of knowing
 - Ritual and ceremony
- Practicing reciprocity with the natural world

When you arrive on campus for the opening day of your semester, you should have completed reading the following parts of *Braiding Sweetgrass*:

1. Preface
2. All of Section 1: Planting Sweetgrass (six chapters)
3. All of Section 2: Tending Sweetgrass (five chapters)
4. The first chapter in Section 4: "In the Footsteps of Nanabozho: Becoming Indigenous to Place"
5. The Epilogue
6. One or two essays from each of the remaining sections. Read the ones that you are drawn to. If you want suggestions, here are some that we recommend because they are aligned with various parts of the MCS curriculum:

Picking Sweetgrass: "The Three Sisters," "Maple Nation: A Citizenship Guide,"
"The Honorable Harvest"

Braiding Sweetgrass: "Sitting in a circle," "Umbilicaria: The Belly Button of the
World"

Burning Sweetgrass: "Windigo Footprints," "The Sacred and the Superfund" (*This essay has
some dark pieces, proceed knowing this if you'd like to*)

Use these questions to guide your reading and come prepared to do some writing related to them once you arrive:

1. Kimmerer presents this book as a "braid...woven from three strands: Indigenous ways of knowing, scientific knowledge, and the story of a Anishinabekwe scientist trying to bring them together in service to what matters most" (x). Where do these different "strands" show up in the book? What is the purpose of telling this story through three intertwined perspectives?
2. Kimmerer shares about the evolving lenses she uses to interact with the natural world. As you think about your life, how would you describe the different influences on your relationship with the more than human world? Which essays or perspectives felt the most resonant to you?

3. Kimmerer talks about how stories impact her and others' perceptions of the world - what stories impact your world view? What stories are you carrying with you as you prepare to join Maine Coast Semester?

While *Braiding Sweetgrass* is woven into the curricula of many of our courses throughout the semester, we will also have time during orientation to write about and discuss *Braiding Sweetgrass*. We will also weave your reflections on the book into opening conversations with your advisor. Please come to campus ready to engage the text in these ways. You are welcome to purchase a copy of the book, or borrow one from your local library. You can also listen to an audio version of the book online. If you do purchase the book, we recommend that you bring it with you to support our discussion and writing.

If you are interested in learning more about Robin Wall Kimmerer or *Braiding Sweetgrass*, The New Yorker Radio Hour podcast has an excellent [episode](#) from August 2023 about the writer and her work.

Health And Wellness

Overview

Chewonki is committed to creating the conditions for transformative growth and the skills to build thriving and sustainable communities for all students. We believe psychological safety and mental wellbeing form the foundation for a student to reach their highest potential academically, personally and in community.

Chewonki takes a multi-tiered and proactive approach to student wellbeing that includes exploring choices for a healthy lifestyle, time for rest and reflection, community building work, and facilitated group discussions on wellness topics. An emphasis on building the necessary skills for sustainable and healthy community living (e.g developing trust, caring for others and sharing responsibilities) gives all student groups the chance to shape their collective experience together.

Health And Wellness Center

Our Health and Wellness Center is staffed by a Director of Health Services, a team of registered nurses, and a part-time mental health coordinator. Our first focus in risk management is to establish practices and policies that support a safe and healthy environment for our community. In the event of illness, and when needed, we work closely with local physicians. Mid Coast Hospital is approximately 15 miles away from campus.

Forms And Medication

It is essential that we have your complete and up-to-date health information. Please submit completed health forms, signed by a physician and a parent/guardian, by July 15 for Fall 2025 students and by December 1 for Spring 2026 students through [Campminder](#), our online health platform. Note that this health record includes immunization records, allergies, physical limitations, and mental health issues or concerns past and present. In addition, health insurance information must be on file with our Health and Wellness Center. All information will be kept confidential.

Note: Without the above information on file, as well as a signed health authorization, you will not be permitted to begin your studies at Maine Coast Semester.

Medical Insurance

Maine Coast Semester does not provide medical insurance for students. Parents or guardians are responsible for medical expenses. Physicians' bills and prescriptions are charged directly to your insurance company or your family. Hospital charges are billed to insurance companies.

Medications

For legal reasons, students cannot use any first aid kits or access medical supplies in the Health and Wellness Center without supervision.

The Health and Wellness team will work with each student to administer medications responsibly.

In The Case Of Illness

If you feel ill or need medical support:

- When you wake up, go to the Health and Wellness Center to receive support. If you are unable to attend Morning Gather and morning chores you must report to the health center by 7:15 a.m.
- At any point during the day, you may go to the Health and Wellness Center if you are feeling unwell or need support (make sure to ask to be excused if it is during class, work program, or other scheduled commitment).
- All absences from a class or any commitment must be approved by a nurse in the Health and Wellness Center, with a plan for care. Students are responsible for making up all work missed during an absence and must be proactive in working with their advisor and teachers to help make up the work.
- Should a student need support after check-in, they must bring a cabin mate and go to the residence of one of the faculty members on duty.

In The Case Of An Emergency

Chewonki is committed to a culture of risk mitigation and management. We have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and our staff is routinely trained to stay current in best practices and site-specific risks. Maine Coast Semester faculty and students practice emergency drills to promote safety and be proactive in responding to incidents. Our response plan includes both universal and hazard-specific protocols that span a range of scales from small to major emergencies.

Communication plays a central role in all our emergency responses, both with participants and staff on the ground as well as with families off-site. In the event of an emergency we will respond and communicate at a pace that prioritizes safety first. In the majority of cases, our protocols and leadership allow us to handle the emergency on the ground with our existing staff. In rare cases, or in the event of a significant threat on campus, we work with local emergency personnel who will help us manage the response.

Families should be aware that if a significant threat arises that calls for relocation or a campus-wide evacuation, we have partnerships and protocols in place that include off-campus evacuation sites (that we don't share for security reasons). In such a scenario, we will provide transportation for participants to the relocation site and back, and will communicate details with families as early as possible.

Should an off-campus evacuation result in typical departure plans being unsafe or inoperable, we would communicate with families and move to our Family Reunification and Participant Release process, which would include:

- Communication with families about the need to pick up your child at a designated pick-up location and time
- A Chewonki staff member being present during the participant hand-off to answer questions, provide additional information, and ensure participant release documentation is completed.

Support Plans

Maine Coast Semester faculty are committed to meeting students where they are and empowering them to take an active role in their semester experience. Students arriving at Maine Coast Semester face a unique set of opportunities and challenges that, if they are well supported, will lead to immense personal development. Being away from familiar home supports, adjusting to group living, navigating novel academic challenges, and adjusting to new daily routines (e.g. family style meals, sleeping in a cabin, farm/ work program, structured study time) can sometimes result in a significant adjustment period. By engaging with advisors and faculty, and being encouraged to express their needs and concerns, students develop the resilience, self-awareness and self-advocacy to thrive in their routines and use their resources here at Chewonki.

We want to emphasize that Maine Coast Semester relies on students having confidence in their ability to function independently and self advocate and is not a therapeutic program. Our program is not advised for students who have recently been in a residential program or who require daily or intensive mental health support. Students who meet Chewonki's Essential Eligibility Requirements but may also have demonstrated academic or emotional needs can coordinate with Chewonki's Health and Wellness department prior arrival to share any support documentation or articulated needs so that we can oversee the creation of a Support Plan. Support Plans can be crafted with input from the student and their family and/or therapist if one is in place and provide advisors and teachers with important social/emotional information about how a student would be best supported while at MCS. The Health and Wellness Center is available to follow up with students who have mental health providers to answer any questions about preparing for Maine Coast Semester and/or scheduling tele-health sessions with home providers if requested.

Academic Support Plans: The Director will create Support Plans that outline the approved accommodations based on sending school's assessments and prior testing. Advisors play a key role in supporting advisees to enact their plans and to self advocate for their own learning, right from their opening conversations with advisees and teachers. Maine Coast Semester does not have a designated learning specialist on staff, and while teachers work hard to know and support all students' learning styles, students should be aware that they will be expected to be able to articulate and advocate for their learning needs/accommodations.

Emotional Support Plans: The Health and Wellness Center will follow up on information in students' health form about any mental health concerns. These pre-semester check-in calls may result in a request for a Support Plan prior to arrival to smooth the transition. Advisors and students may also request a plan during the semester if they identify a need for additional support. Emotional Support Plans put students in the driver's seat of their emotional care plan and enable them to express their needs/goals in their own words so they can be communicated to all the adults who work with them. Students sometimes choose to share parts of

their support plans with peers to support their emotional well being in the community. The Health and Wellness Center may involve a student's home therapist and family to create a plan.

Academic Life

Study Hours Expectations

Study hours are an intentional time when our entire community can dedicate ourselves to developing good work habits and focusing on our intellectual pursuits. Given the rigorous nature of our academic program, you will need **more than** the five weekly nights of study hours (2 hours) to complete your assignments, so we encourage you to make productive use of this time.

Study hours (7:30 - 9:30 p.m.) is a time of quiet for all on campus so that you may work, read, and reflect while knowing that you are not missing out on a social opportunity.

1. Study time is to be used for study, homework, and intellectual endeavors. At the start of study hours you must sign-in to let on duty faculty and fellow students know where you will be working.
2. Study hours is a time strictly for academic work and/or communication with home. Plan to limit socializing (virtual and in-person) during these two hours.
3. Respectful silence on campus is the expectation between 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Sunday – Thursday. This includes all common areas as well as cabins. Because most studying takes place in common areas, the quiet study time must be honored by the entire community.
4. Please be conscious of the fact that everyone has their own approach to completing school assignments, as well as different study needs. During study hours, you should not disturb others or do things that could make your peers feel socially excluded. If you are in the habit of listening to music while studying, you should use headphones or earbuds to ensure that no one can hear it.
5. If you need to work with another student, you should do so only in spaces designated as collaborative workspaces.
6. If you need to continue studying after study hours, you will need to bring your materials with you to your cabin at check-in.

If you want to leave a public study space before the end of study hours, you must check out with the faculty on duty.

Before leaving study hours for the night to return to your cabin, please be sure to do the following:

- Check out with one of the faculty members on duty.
- Store backpacks in your assigned Allen Center cubby.
- Use the bathroom, brush teeth, and fill up water bottles by 9:55 p.m.
- Be in cabins by cabin check at 10 p.m.

Students and faculty create specific study hour guidelines each semester to promote student agency in meeting the needs of individuals and the group.

Comments & Grades

Maine Coast Semester issues letter grades along with narrative comments that support a student's growth and reflect their performance.

At the semester midterm, you will receive brief narrative comments and estimated grades from each of your teachers. This midterm status report check-in is intended to provide a snapshot of how you are doing so that you can work with your teachers to achieve the goals you have set for yourself while at Maine Coast Semester.

At the end of the semester, you, your families, and your school will receive via email comments from your teachers and an advisor letter offering observations and reflections on your experience at Maine Coast Semester. In addition to comments, this communication includes a grade for each course and an official transcript. If you need additional copies of your transcript, please contact our Registrar: registrar@chewonki.org.

See [FERPA Compliance Notice](#) regarding records in the Appendix.

Late Work Policy

Maine Coast Semester is based largely on a dynamic intellectual spirit that we hope pervades your entire experience. Teachers assume that work will be done on time and to your best ability. However, we recognize that illness and extenuating circumstances can interfere with timely completion of work. Each teacher establishes expectations around late work for their classrooms, and it is your responsibility to understand the policies in each of your classes and to work proactively with your teachers to solve challenges.

The College Process

Although Maine Coast Semester can offer some advice and insights into the college process, we do not have formal college counseling services and encourage you to continue working with your school counseling office. In the spring, we will hold a college counseling weekend with college counselors and/or a college admissions dean, who, together, will offer a process strategy session that provides perspective and tools to students so that they can begin to (or further) imagine and navigate their post-high school plans. One-on-one college counseling meetings can be arranged with the visiting college counselors that weekend.

We are committed to supporting our students after their semester by writing college recommendations (students may make a request to one Maine Coast Semester teacher), and we suggest students make those requests early. Our Alumni office can also help by connecting you to the network of Chewonki alumni across the country.

Standardized Testing

For guidance in standardized testing (PSAT®, SAT®, ACT®, AP®), you should follow the advice of college counselors at your sending school. *NOTE: We recommend using your personal email to set up a College Board account rather than your school email, just in case your school "un-enrolls" you during your time here and you need to retrieve your password.*

For Fall Students:

The PSAT® will be administered on campus. Test scores will be reported to your sending school and will not be reported to Maine Coast Semester. There is no need to pre-register for this exam.

For Spring Students: SAT® And ACT® Tests

The following is a recommended testing schedule to best complement your Maine Coast Semester experience: Take the SAT® at home December 6, 2025 or on June 6, 2026.

- Take the ACT® at home June 13 or July 11, 2026

You and your sending school counselor may decide it would be best for you to take the ACT® or SAT® during the semester. We will help you sign up for these exams and also provide transportation to the ACT® on April 11 and the SAT® on May 2 at a local high school (and note that a photo ID is required for admission). We do not, however, recommend taking the SAT® in May, since it is an extremely busy time during the semester, with the end of academic classes and AP® exams overlapping.

For Spring Students: AP® Tests

Maine Coast Semester provides the opportunity for students to take Advanced Placement® tests for the courses we offer during the semester (Calculus AB, Calculus BC and US History). Other AP exams should be arranged with sending schools to take place during the late testing window at the end of May 2026. We ask families to carefully consider whether taking AP tests is advisable for your student due to the additional commitment of time and added pressure. Other subject areas outside of these courses require independent preparation. AP tests require significant time commitment on top of the fullness of our curriculum, weekend programming, and residential lives, and this comes with trade-offs to students' place-based experience. Please contact our Director, Sarah Rebick (srebick@chewonki.org) if you have questions.

We will be in touch with you early in the fall to provide more information about the registration process for Semester 76 students wishing to take AP tests. For more information, please contact our Registrar: registrar@chewonki.org

Residential Life

Cabin Living

Cabin living is a unique feature of Maine Coast Semester and will quickly become your home away from home. Cabins form the backdrop for life long memories of connection and collaboration, and a vehicle for life-sustaining learning about how to live in community and connect across differences. Each cabin is heated with a woodstove; students both tend the fires in the stoves and process the wood that fuel them while on work program. In your first week, your cabin will work together to create a set of cabin agreements which can be revised at any time during the semester. Each cabin has dedicated faculty Cabin Parents who are there to listen, facilitate cabin meetings, and respond to any concerns.

Students are encouraged to strive for eight hours of sleep each night. Adequate sleep enhances learning, strengthens your immune system, and gives you the energy to balance classes, study hours, work and play. Faculty will hold students to clear expectations about check-in each night to lay the foundation for healthy sleeping habits. Students can work with their advisor and the health center if they need support getting enough sleep.

Cabin Rules:

1. Check-in is at 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Friday and 11:00 p.m. on Saturday. After this time, you may not leave your cabin. You must bring any study materials, snacks, water bottles with you to the cabin before check-in, as well as take care of bathroom needs. Leaving after check-in (other than for emergent bathroom needs) is a violation of our Great Expectations.
2. No open flames in any cabin at any time except to light the woodstove. No candles, incense, lighters, etc. Tapestries are a fire hazard and are not permitted. Cabins must be kept clean and uncluttered at all times for safety.
3. To remain in compliance with health and safety standards and to support all students' needs for privacy and maintaining personal space and boundaries, single beds must remain 6' apart at all times, and only one person can sleep in each bed.
4. After at least two weeks on campus and discussion within cabin groups to set guidelines for welcoming visitors to their cabin, students will be allowed to visit other cabins between lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday and between brunch and dinner on Sunday.

Bathrooms

Each cabin is assigned a bathroom, which they are expected to use throughout the semester. Each community member will have access to a bathroom that affirms their gender identity and is a space where they feel safe. We have both single-gender and all-gender bathrooms available for use.

While anyone is welcome to use the all-gender bathroom, it exists for individuals who feel physically and emotionally safe in an all-gender space and also exists for gender non-binary individuals.

Religious And Spiritual Life

We support students in their religious and spiritual lives at Maine Coast Semester both by creating ways for them to practice their current traditions, and by providing space for them to explore other traditions if interested. Our Associate Director and Chaplain supports this work as it evolves to fit the shape of each semester, and is available for pastoral care or spiritual direction if desired.

School Meeting

School meeting is a regularly scheduled all semester gathering whose purpose is twofold: To tend to the health and well being of the semester community by engaging pertinent topics and fostering a sense of community and belonging; and to provide space for students to learn and practice facilitation skills. School meetings are typically designed and facilitated by students with faculty support. Examples of recent topics for school meetings: socio-economic class, family systems, cliques and gossip, race, religious/spiritual identity. School meeting is also a time that students and faculty use to tend to emerging community needs as they arise.

Inclusive Relationships

A guiding principle of our semester school and the Chewonki community is that all relationships are inclusive and socially appropriate (See Great Expectation #5). We believe the semester offers each student a time when they can be free of the pressures associated with intimate or exclusive relationships and peer pressure. We encourage students to live into this opportunity.

As a small, intentional community that strives to be inclusive, we discourage *socially exclusive* relationships of all kinds. Students are expected to engage thoughtfully and intentionally with each other to ensure that the development of strong connections between individuals does not negatively impact the overall school community or the relationships between individuals and the community.

Campus Boundaries & Visitation Policy

To support the strength of our community, equity of student experience, and program cohesiveness in our structured weekend programming students remain on campus for the entirety of the semester, except in the following situations:

- Medical appointments, arranged by our Health and Wellness staff
- Science field lab and semester-organized field trips
- Semester organized weekend activities
- Backcountry expeditions
- Physical fitness following appropriate protocols
- Family emergencies
- One-of-a-kind events pre-approved by the co-directors of semester school

We invite families to enjoy an interactive experience of the semester on **Family Day**, which is the Saturday before Thanksgiving in the fall (November 22) and the Saturday before departure day in the spring (May 16).

Families are welcome and encouraged to attend this full day of student-led programming and celebration that provides a glimpse into Maine Coast Semester life.

In addition to this main event, there will be one or two Saturday afternoons open for family members to visit their child on campus between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. The dates of the optional visit days will be shared separately along with guidance if you plan to visit.

Food, Meals, & The Kitchen

Eating healthy, organic, homegrown, and locally grown foods is very much a part of the Chewonki experience. We hope that you will enjoy the food prepared for you and that you will be willing to try new foods in the spirit of experimentation. Eating meals together is an important part of our community; you are expected to attend all meals and to make an effort to eat the food offered through the dining hall rather than looking to the snack bar for substitutes. That said, the health and kitchen teams work closely with students and their advisors to meet any specific dietary needs.

Our commitment to maintaining the ongoing health and safety of all members of the Chewonki community is reflected in our protocols for meal preparation, dining, and chores in the dishroom.

Please Do

- Let us know if you have any dietary restrictions or needs by indicating this information on your health forms and letting your advisor know in your getting-to-know you conversations before the semester begins.
- Feel welcome to enjoy your own nut-free snacks in your cabin. Each student will have their own bin to store personal snack items.

Please Do Not

- Enter the kitchen without explicit permission.
- Bring outside food or beverages into the dining hall (there will always be community snacks available for your consumption).

Nut Policy

Peanuts and tree nuts are not permitted in the kitchen or dining hall, on trips or in cabins. This includes peanuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, lychee nuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts, as well as their extracts, nut butters (including nut butter products such as Nutella), candies containing tree nuts, nut oils and nut milks (e.g. almond milk), and other products containing tree nuts. Coconut and nutmeg are allowed as they do not pose the same allergy risk. We ask that families not send care packages with snacks that include nuts.

Dish Crew

Each student will be on a five- or six-student dish crew for the semester. Two to three times per week, on a rotating basis, each crew will be responsible for cleaning all of the dishes of a meal and tidying the dish room. During their “on” meal, the crew will finish their meal early and start work before others finish their meal. Dish crews will be present for announcements after meals. Faculty members train dish crews and are available for on-going support. In addition, the Manager of Food Services communicates and holds standards required

by State of Maine health codes.

Laundry & Mail

Laundry Facilities

Laundry machines are available for use by all students, designated staff, and residential faculty/staff. Semester students are expected to do their own laundry on campus, and they will have scheduled access to the laundry room on a rotating basis to ensure that every student has a regular weekly opportunity to do their personal laundry. Chewonki provides laundry detergent, and there is no fee to use the laundry facilities.

Mail

You will be able to send and receive mail (including packages) as usual while at Maine Coast Semester. Please bring stamps and envelopes with you. You will also be able to charge postal fees to your student account over the course of the semester. We can also help you ship items via UPS or FedEx.

Your address while here will be:

(Your Name)
Maine Coast Semester 75 (or 76)
485 Chewonki Neck Rd.
Wiscasset, ME 04578

Technology

Phones

Landline phones are available for students to make calls until 9:45 p.m. each day.

Students will have computer access and may make calls using web-based platforms in spaces on campus designated for this purpose. Calls are not permitted in public spaces (i.e., the Quad or Ellis Room).

Students are not permitted to have cell phones on campus. Being free of cell phones for a semester is one of the gifts of Maine Coast Semester for students. Countless studies reveal the myriad physical and mental health benefits derived from limiting screens and digital media. At Maine Coast Semester, we value face-to-face communication, unmediated community interactions, and access to the natural world. While computers serve as important educational tools, we see benefits in minimizing the buzz and instant gratification from cell phone entertainment and social media. Students routinely state the break from phones and social media as a highlight of their community experience.

Many students bring cell phones to campus for their utility during travel. We will collect cell phones on day one and securely store them during the semester, and return them to students as tools for travel.

Computers

Chewonki provides computer access for student use. We have web-based desktop computers available to all students in designated spaces on campus. Students should not bring personal devices to campus.

Email

Each student will be given a Chewonki email address to use for academic and community use. The format of the email address is the first initial of the preferred first name, the full last name and semester number (i.e. Jane Doe would be jdoe75@chewonki.org).

Technology & Digital Resource Use Policy

Each Maine Coast Semester student is expected to be responsible and accountable at all times when using digital tools and resources, including, but not limited to Chewonki-provided computers, printers, Google's G-Suite for Education software, school-provided web-based software, as well as software used in conjunction with a student's Chewonki email account. The use of digital tools and resources must be ethical; reflect our Goals for Graduates; demonstrate respect for intellectual property; and guarantee each individual's right to privacy and freedom from intimidation, harassment, or annoyance.

Maine Coast Semester students are expected to abide by generally accepted standards of digital citizenship, including and not limited to:

- Share personal information with discretion and with the knowledge that behaviors and information shared online are tracked and viewable by third-parties
- Learn how to identify and avoid online scams, false representations on social media, and malicious persons
- Develop strong habits to protect private information and personal security, including protecting usernames and passwords
- Resist cyberbullying by not participating in or reinforcing harmful behavior, supporting targets of bullying, and following our community expectations at all times
- Seek adult assistance and advice when new or difficult situations involving digital technology arise

Our standards regarding student behavior, as well as all relevant state and federal laws, apply to the use of Chewonki-provided resources. Specifically, no student should:

- Use another's identity, user ID, or password or otherwise gain unauthorized access to digital resources
- Damage computers, printers, computer systems, or networks
- Use obscene language or harass, insult, or attack others
- Violate copyright laws

In addition, Maine Coast Semester students are responsible for:

- Protecting their account log-in and passwords
- Communicating and connecting with only people they know when using digital tools
- Appropriately divulging any personally identifiable information, including name, current location, etc.
- Managing the appropriateness of content they share via digital tools, including text, photos, and videos

Students should be aware that everything they do online using digital tools can be found, revealed, and shared, possibly creating a negative impact on their reputations, college admissions, and even their future careers.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

The rise of AI's capacity for writing complete paragraphs and essays from a few key words and prompts in a way that can be untraceable is a disruptor in the landscape of academic work, especially in the realm of the creative arts of writing and design. While we expect the landscape will continue to evolve, Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki holds to core principles of academic integrity.

Care must be given to the craft of generating original work. Our expectation is that all work in classes must be fully one's own. AI text-generating tools are not allowed for use on any assignment.

We recognize that as the technology develops, AI provides powerful tools with many applications. On some assignments or in some circumstances, use of this tool may be part of our learning process. If and when this is the case, it will be spelled out, and when used, its use must be documented appropriately.

Music

Music is an important part of life and we encourage students to produce and listen to music collaboratively and thoughtfully while at Maine Coast Semester. We encourage you to sing and play live music on instruments you bring, as well as on the piano, guitar, drum, and other assorted instruments.

We welcome listening to recorded music as well, and allow students to listen to music on computers with headphones during personal time. Because our campus is home to many other people and programs, broadcasting music over speakers is not permitted in public spaces, except when explicit permission is given, for example, in the dish room where music creates a lively mood during cleaning and dishes at the end of meals. No music may be broadcast during the academic day or study hours.

We look forward to thoughtful discussions about the role of technology and media in our lives.

Social Media & Online Shopping

Although engaging in online entertainment, e.g. movies, television, games, etc., along with listening to music and shopping are important parts of life for many students, while attending Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki, you are expected to moderate your consumption of online entertainment and shopping. During your semester you will have restricted internet access, with priority given to sites that support your academic pursuits.

Your teachers look forward to having thoughtful conversations with you about the role of technology and media in our daily lives.

Maine Coast Semester students are expected to understand that as a member of the Chewonki community you represent the Maine Coast Semester School and the Chewonki Foundation at all times. Anything a student posts or publishes online is a representation of Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki and the Chewonki Foundation. Posting and/or publishing must be done responsibly and adhere to our Great Expectations and Community Standards. Our students are expected to be accountable for their actions at all times.

Privacy

We will make every effort to respect students' privacy on a day-to-day basis when using Chewonki-provided digital resources. However, our network administrator has domain access and may review files, communications, and log files to ensure that students are using resources in keeping with our Great Expectations and Community Standards. Students should not expect that content stored on our network, within Google Apps for Education domain, or on other Chewonki-provided digital resources to be private.

Violations

Digital violations of our Great Expectations and Community Standards may result in loss of privileges and/or temporary or permanent separation from the Maine Coast Semester community.

Computer-Free Times

For a few days at the beginning and end of each semester, students will live without computers. This enables us to focus on spending time with one another during these important moments for our community. Additionally, throughout the semester, we reserve the entirety of each Saturday as screen-free to honor the importance we place on face-to-face interactions.

Network Printing

Students may print black and white papers on network printers.

Work Program, Sustainability, & Outdoor Programs

Morning Gather & Chores

We begin each morning with Morning Gather, a moment for reflection before breakfast, morning meeting and chores. Chores, which rotate biweekly, are essential to the running of this community, express our values of taking care of our place and each other, and offer an opportunity to develop a work ethic and life skills. Upon arrival at Maine Coast Semester, students will be assigned and trained in chores. Chore assignments are always posted on the bulletin board in the Wallace Dining Hall, which is referred to as “The Brain.”

Work Program

Our work program, daily chores, and dish crews are a cornerstone of the Maine Coast Semester educational experience – the part of our program where students do authentic daily work with their hands that has value to the community and that develop a number of skills and dispositions: showing up, developing a personal work ethic, experiencing collaboration and accountability on a team, craftsmanship, and finishing strong. Work program takes place with adult educator guides from Maine Coast Semester faculty and across the Chewonki Foundation, often with music, satisfaction, and the connections forged in organic conversations. Completing the common and essential tasks of a community – independently and on teams – offers a tangible rite of passage for adolescents, compelling students from being driven by extrinsic/external motivation to intrinsic/internal motivation – doing a job well not because one is told to, but because it feels good to contribute one’s efforts to the community we call home.

Work with our hands is woven into the fabric of each day. We start each morning cleaning and taking care of our place in student-faculty teams before breakfast. A background and cyclic vitality to each day plays out in the dish room, where students and faculty take part in a weekly dish crew. On two afternoons each week – on Tuesday/Thursday and Friday for 1.5-2 hours – students join work program rotations doing community work that is authentic, real, and mentored by adults on our farm, wood crew, facilities crew (which may include repairing, building, moving, fixing, or painting), kitchen crew, trail crew, invasive plant removal, raking leaves and shoveling snow, outdoor program support, Traveling Natural History Program maintenance, planning a school meeting, writing blogs, and weekly mop-and-clean. Our work program cultivates an active, connected, community-oriented lifestyle which includes exercise, skill building, and camaraderie.

Safety Policies For Work Program

1. Eye and ear protection should be worn when using machinery, power tools, mowers, and at other appropriate times.
2. Work gloves, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and work or hiking boots should be worn for work programs. Long hair should be tied back and in some cases all jewelry removed.

3. While doing work that requires communication with a crew or supervisor, students must be fully present and not listening to headphones/earbuds.

Sustainability In Practice

Chewonki has become a recognized model for sustainable management of natural resources. We put ideas about sustainable living and renewable technologies into practice, and many students have first-time, hands-on experiences that inform lifetime behaviors. Here are just a few of the ways sustainable practices are part of every student's daily life:

Salt Marsh Farm

Our farm is a small, diversified farm that is greatly prized by our community. Its primary mission is to educate students while producing food, wood products, and fiber for the community. The farm consists of approximately 25 acres of open land and 150 acres of woodlot. One acre is cultivated for vegetable production, and the remainder is comprised of pasture, hay fields, farm buildings, trees, and stone walls. The gardens are carefully planned and intensively managed by three full-time, year-round farm staff. Our gardens produce vegetables for our dining hall. We also raise livestock for meat, fiber, and timber for firewood and some sawlogs.

Students have opportunities to directly participate in farm activities during afternoon work programs, morning chores, volunteer shifts on weekends, and in our Sustainability Seminars.

Human Ecology Seminars

Each week students learn from members of the Chewonki community in our seminars in Energy Systems and Farm and Food Systems, as well as other topics related to human and natural systems. These talks will provide you with a context for understanding the wider importance and application of the ways we choose to live here (from why we compost to how photovoltaic panels work) and are also a wonderful opportunity for students to learn from local experts – people who work every day in these fields and have a tremendous wealth of experience and knowledge to share with the community. They will expose you to working systems from which you can learn about strategies for living more sustainably that you may apply to your lives beyond Chewonki as well. Outdoor Living Skills, Backcountry Expeditions And Outdoor Leadership Weekend

Outdoor Skills and Leadership

All students participate in our Outdoor Skills and Leadership program, which is woven into the curriculum in weekend programming and trips throughout the semester. Our program emphasizes leadership skills in the outdoors including: communication, decision making, trip planning, following safety protocols, and learning about and respecting places, wildlife, and people. Specific skills taught throughout the semester include: wood processing with an axe and saw, baking over a fire, tying knots, setting up and sleeping under a tarp, and navigating with a map and compass.

There are three major outdoor experiences (“peaks”) throughout the semester: Backcountry Expeditions, Outdoor Leadership Weekend, and Solos. During backcountry expeditions in the fall semester, students spend five days on the sea, paddling down rivers, or in the mountains, often setting up camp in a new location each

night. In the spring semester, students spend four days cross-country skiing or snowshoeing and sleep in heated cabins. For Outdoor Leadership Weekend, students participate in a two-day Wilderness First Aid course taught and certified by Wilderness Medical Associates and spend two days camping on Chewonki Neck, strengthening their skill base and their comfort in the woods to prepare for Solos. The culminating peak of the Outdoor Living Skills program is the 48-hour Solo on Chewonki Neck.

Solos

Every student will spend two days on a solo encampment on Chewonki Neck, weather permitting. This is a time for reflection and rest, not an exercise in outdoor survival. You will be fully prepared and trained prior to your solo with tools, perspectives, and knowledge to support you with the physical, environmental, and reflective parts of this experience. In addition to an ample and intentional preparatory curriculum, we have a series of non-verbal check-ins and risk management protocols to ensure that all students are safe during their solo experience.

Camping on Chewonki Neck

Following Outdoor Leadership Weekend, during which wilderness first aid and general outdoor skills are developed – and provided that students have demonstrated adequate responsibility and leadership throughout the semester – student groups may camp outdoors on Friday or Saturday nights. It is a popular part of our program that celebrates students' connection with the natural world and each other, as well as their growing competence in the outdoors.

Overnight camping on Chewonki Neck must be approved, in advance, by the Dean of Students or Head of Semester School and the faculty on duty that night.

Guidelines For Camping On Chewonki Neck

- Camping out may occur on Friday or Saturday evenings (only) after scheduled programming is complete.
- Students must return and be on time for their first commitment (farm chores, breakfast, brunch) the following morning.
- Camping out on the Neck may only occur at specific locations in group sizes of 3 to 10, with no more than two self-contained student groups out at any given time.
- In order to camp out, students must complete the "Camping Out on Chewonki Neck Planning Form" and meet with a weekend on-duty faculty person by Friday lunch (12:00 p.m.) to review plans and receive approval.

Once Out Camping

- All school rules apply (including safety expectations)
- No fires unless a Semester School faculty member is with the group for the entirety of the time that the fire is happening.
- Students camping will be checked in at check-in time by an on-duty faculty member.
- Protocols exist for returning to campus if help is needed.

Basic Gear Expectations

- All students camping out must bring headlamps or flashlights and know the way back to campus.

- Be prepared with proper gear. Students should begin by using their own camping gear. There is some capacity for students to borrow gear from Pack-out if coordinated ahead of time.

Waterfront Guidelines

The Chewonki waterfronts are wonderful resources and we encourage all staff and participants to take advantage of the seasonal swimming and boating opportunities that it provides. The waterfronts also need to be used with respect to ensure the safety of all participants. Our Waterfront Policies and Guidelines have been developed in alignment with our field protocols and must be followed by all Chewonki programs and individuals that use the waterfront.

Maine Coast Semester's seasonal use of the waterfront in fall, winter, and spring comes with additional and sensible seasonal restrictions. For the purpose of framing and highlighting Semester's use of the waterfront in this handbook, key points are listed below:

General Waterfront Rules

- Swimming and boating must be supervised by an appropriately trained adult following discipline-specific guidelines.
- No swimming or boating should be done when gale, storm, or hurricane warnings are in effect or during a thunderstorm.
- Swimming and boating can only occur during daylight.
- No swimming or boating without facu
- Lifeguards or lookouts must remain out of the water unless assisting a swimmer or boater.

Polar Bear Dip

Polar Bear dip is a dunk-style swim, defined as entering the water from the shoreline, without jumping, to a depth no higher than thigh deep while keeping feet on the ground. It must take place with the supervision of two staff members who serve as designated lookouts and who must ensure that the following regulations are followed:

- Maintain a lookout to participant ratio of 1:7 with a maximum of 12 dippers
- Remain out of the water unless assisting a dipper
- Ensure that secure closed-toed shoes are worn by dippers
- The two lookouts must have:
 - Reaching pole
 - Ring Buoy
 - Chewonki Med Kit
- There may be conditions under which polar bear dips may not take place, including when the waterfront is too iced over or at times when local conditions do not allow for safe supervision of the dip.

Swimming At The Waterfront

- For the purposes of this handbook, swimming is defined as being in the water when feet are no longer in contact with the bottom.
- To swim from the dock, the combined air and water temperature must be more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit with a minimum water temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

- At least two lifeguards must be on duty.
- A lifeguard to swimmer ratio of 1:7 must always be maintained.
- Comprehensive swim tests are only offered in the summer season. Since passing a swim test is a requirement to swim without PFDs, and since Maine Coast Semester operates outside of the summer season, all swimming during the semester requires wearing PFDs.

Boating

Boating in small boats is often part of the Semester experience, particularly in the fall, where backcountry trips involve canoes and kayaks. We offer supervised opportunities for participants to use non motorized boats from our waterfront and to develop some skills in boat handling. It is not a program goal of Maine Coast Semester to train or equip our students to use boats unsupervised at our tidal waterfront. Under no circumstances may a student or group of students take a boat out unsupervised from a shore or dock on Chewonki Neck.

For boating to take place, the combined air and water temperature must be more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, all boaters must wear fully-secured PFDs, close-toed shoes, and appropriate clothing for the conditions. All participants must be with at least two appropriately trained and provisioned instructors or staff members, with adult to participant ratio of 1:8.

Disciplinary Process

Guiding Principles

Our Great Expectations and Community Standards are the major rules within which we operate for the physical and emotional safety of all, and for the integrity of our community. We view these rules as the container in which we create the vibrant and supportive community that defines a Maine Coast Semester experience. Trust is central to these rules and all that they help us create.

Our commitment to restorative practices in our disciplinary process offers opportunities for deep learning and growth if a student breaks a rule. If all parties are willing to authentically engage, restorative practice offers the student the opportunity to take responsibility for and reflect on their actions, and then to repair harm, recommit, and contribute positively to the community. Repeated rule-breaking will result in increasingly serious consequences, and could indicate that a student is not in a place to continue participation in our program.

What A Student Can Expect:

When a faculty person becomes aware of an actual or potential rule breaking, they first tend to any immediate safety concerns of students involved and then begin an inquiry process.

Our data gathering process includes conversations with students and community members involved to gain a more full picture of the situation at hand. If it becomes clear that a rule has been broken, students involved will begin the restorative process with their advisor and an administrator, and will contact parents together as next steps and consequences are determined.

Potential Consequences And Next Steps:

Restorative Process: If all parties are willing, a rule violation may be addressed through restorative practices whose goal is to create deeper understanding, heal harm, and change behavior. The process typically includes multiple steps over several days with significant reflection and conversation that explore one's behavior, and result in action steps that will repair harm with self, others and the community.

Consequences for Minor Incidents: There is a wide range of behavioral missteps and boundary pushing that will be met with restorative practices to learn, reflect, and move on while not being serious enough to trigger a more serious consequence like temporary separation from the community. Advisors, cabin parents, and other faculty members may facilitate restorative processes in these cases. Depending on the impact and outcome, a smaller incident may be immediately reported to parents by the advisor.

Consequences and Reporting for Major incidents: The most serious consequences for major rule infractions include the following and will be reported as indicated below:

- Consequence: *Temporary separation from the community with a restorative process.*
Reporting: Not recorded on transcript; described in final advisor letter with restorative language
- Consequence: *Temporary separation from the community for behavior that endangers another student or is illegal with a restorative process.*
Reporting: May or may not be reported on transcript, though named and described in final advisor letter; may need further reporting to sending school and college applications
- Consequence: *Permanent Separation/Expulsion***
Reporting: Recorded on transcript, if issued (permanent record)
If expulsion occurs within the final four weeks of the semester, students may still earn credit through completion of work.

Consequences/Next Steps for illegal substances/activities

If illegal activities or substances are possibly involved, the situation initiates a particular set of protocols including our Illegal Substance Policy and search protocols. If there is concern about addiction, students and parents are referred to the Health and Wellness Center for support (parallel to and regardless of discipline process).

Consequences/Next Steps for sexual activity

If there is likelihood of sexual activity, students are referred to the Health and Wellness Center (parallel to and regardless of discipline process). By law, parents are not informed by the school if a student accesses reproductive health services. (See ["Minor's Rights: A Guide to Confidential Health Care in Maine"](#) by Maine Family Planning).

What Parents Can Expect:

As we learn of major safety violations or rule breaking, the parent(s) will be notified. If a student faces a serious disciplinary or restorative consequence, the communication home will include a phone call from the administrator, and the student will have the opportunity to speak directly with their parent(s) with the

administrator present. If a student is part of an inquiry involving a number of students, the initial communication home may happen by email.

Illegal Substance Policy

Overview And Context

In accordance with Federal laws illegal substances such as drugs, alcohol and nicotine in any form are prohibited at Chewonki.

Policy

In order to promote the highest possible standards of learning, as well as the physical, social and emotional well-being of students, this policy is designed to: aid students in abstaining from the unlawful use of alcohol and drugs; provide for early intervention when use is detected; and, provide disciplinary action when necessary. Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

Any staff member who has reason to suspect that a student has violated this policy is expected to report the incident to an appropriate administrator immediately.

A. Communication and Prevention

Chewonki will communicate expectations and this policy to all students and parents. When on campus, Chewonki will reiterate expectations and provide students with information and activities to support them in following these rules, and living full and vibrant lives. There will also be a short amnesty period after arrival, in which students may anonymously turn in illegal substances they might have brought to campus.

Such information and activities may address the legal, social and health consequences of alcohol and drug use and will provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure. Information will also include an overview of specific parts of the policies, including sanctuary, amnesty search, and search protocols. Chewonki will work in partnership with students, parents, and local law enforcement to eliminate these risks for all students.

B. Intervention and Consequences

Health Intervention Path: In keeping with our commitment to health and wellness, Maine Coast Semester has a Sanctuary Policy (included below) to offer a health focused intervention for a student struggling with substance use who proactively comes forward to an adult seeking help.

Disciplinary Path: If a student chooses to bring, hide, use, sell, or share illicit substances – and has not utilized the opportunities for health intervention or amnesty windows – then they are breaking a major rule and will face disciplinary consequences. Based on the seriousness or pattern of the offense, temporary separation from the community with a restorative process may be possible, but permanent separation from the community may be necessary.

A more detailed description of the illegal substance policy is available upon request.

C. Search Policy

Students are expected to maintain a safe and healthy environment for themselves and others at all times. In order to ensure the safety and health of students in our community the School maintains the right to inspect communal and student living spaces and belongings for compliance in regards to fire, physical conditions, and illegal substances at any time, for any reason.

In addition, if we have reason to suspect that a student may have illegal substances in their possession, we may carry out a search of personal belongings (which may include but is not limited to clothing, bags, backpacks, devices), buildings, communal and living spaces, and campus. Reasons we might conduct a search of student's belongings include but are not limited to observation of:

- Suspicious smell of illegal substances from a student's clothing
- Behaving as though one is under the influence
- Multiple students raising concern about drug use
- Rule-breaking that circumstantially points to possession or use of illegal substances

Search protocols for whole cabin and campus searches will be similar to individual searches, but involve more people.

Sanctuary Policy

Alcohol and drugs (including nicotine, marijuana, and vaping) are incompatible with participant health and safety and are prohibited across all programs at Chewonki. We also recognize the cultural prevalence and addictive nature of substances. In keeping with our deep commitment to participant health, to honesty and restorative practices, and to developing the life-long skill of building one's support networks, we offer a Sanctuary path by which participants in danger of addiction, in immediate danger from intoxication, or who simply want to discuss concerns or questions with an adult, can receive a health intervention that supersedes disciplinary action for substance abuse.

Seeking Sanctuary

A participant's drug and/or alcohol use poses both a long-term and immediate threat to their safety. The spirit of this policy is about identifying and supporting a health need, and must be initiated before any discipline concerns are present.

- The participant at risk – alone or with the support of other participants – may approach any adult in the community and clearly state that they are seeking help through our Sanctuary path.
- If on campus: the staff member involved in such a conversation will immediately take the participant(s) to the Health and Wellness Center for evaluation.
- If off campus: the staff member will call the health team's support phone for further guidance.

Response

Once Sanctuary is engaged:

- The Health and Wellness Center staff will evaluate and, if necessary, provide immediate medical treatment.
- The participant's parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
- MCS administrators will be notified and may choose to bring in other team leaders to support.

- The participant, program director, and counselor will create a support plan to facilitate the student's continued health and well-being.
- Support plan could include, but would not be limited to:
 - Required visits with a counselor
 - Completion of a drug and alcohol evaluation by a licensed professional

If a student requires support beyond the scope of our mission and resources, response may include separation to receive needed medical support.

Financial Information

Tuition, Room & Board

Generally, families will be billed directly for the entire amount of the tuition (minus the deposit amount) with payment due approximately **one month** before the start of the semester. Some sending schools bill the family for the cost of the program, minus the deposit, which is paid ahead of time directly to Chewonki.

Should the student withdraw between the tuition due date and August 1, 2025 (fall semester) or January 1, 2026 (spring semester), we will retain 70% of the tuition. In the event that Maine Coast Semester is unable to open, the tuition payment (including the deposit) is refundable up to the first day of the semester. No refund of tuition is made after the start of the program for any reason. This no-refund policy includes, but is not limited to, the following: voluntary departure, dismissal as a result of non-compliance with the major expectations of the program as outlined in this handbook, dismissal due to a situation caused by non-disclosure of pre-existing medical or mental health conditions or major change to student's health, or a force majeure event. At this time, we are not able to offer a tuition insurance option.

Student Account

The student account charge of \$500 is included in the tuition bill. This fee will be used to cover required laptop insurance. This fee may also be used by the student to purchase general supplies, personal expenses, mailing and shipping fees, College Board® testing fees, and school-sanctioned events from Chewonki. Some miscellaneous items, such as Chewonki-branded clothing, may also be charged to the student account.

Final Accounting

Within eight weeks of the end of the semester you will receive a final accounting of the student account, along with a refund owed or balance due, from our business manager.

Appendix

Some Comments About Academic Integrity

By Paul Arthur, former faculty member

The central point is twofold: Make sure that you do all the work that is expected of you in any given course, and make sure you give credit to everyone who influenced you in doing a particular piece of work. At the extremes things are pretty clear: It is appropriate and legitimate to hand in something that is entirely your own, and sign your name to it; it is entirely inappropriate and a clear case of plagiarism to hand in someone else's writing in an effort to defraud people into thinking it is yours. Between these extremes lies a continuum that includes accurate footnotes, parenthetical acknowledgment, careful paraphrasing, unrecognized borrowing of ideas, inadvertent omission of citations, inaccurate or incomplete citations, and excessive use of others' writing. It is often difficult to discern when we have crossed the line from what is acceptable to what is ethically questionable, and from the ethically questionable to that which is academically dishonest.

Some rules of thumb may help:

1. When in doubt, give explicit, complete credit. You can do this with footnotes or endnotes, or through citations within the text¹. Which of these you do depends on the nature of the assignment, but you should be consistent within any single piece of writing which convention you use.
2. If you use more than three of someone else's words in a row, put them in quotation marks and offer a citation.
3. If you use a specialized term in a way an author does, you should offer the author's definition and note that the author uses the term in this way. [E.g., Bill Clinton said "What I mean by 'is' is the following..."]
4. If you closely paraphrase what someone else has said, or you purposely mimic their writing style, give credit.
5. If you are heavily influenced by someone's idea or persuasive argument, give credit. You can do this formally with a footnote¹ or informally through an acknowledgment at an appropriate and stylistically acceptable place. [I am grateful to Amy Rogers for helping me to understand and articulate this point.]

There are other possible breaches of academic integrity that revolve around merely appearing to put in the appropriate effort. One obvious example of this is failing to do your share of a group project. Another example is relying too much on another student's help to finish your assignment or using another student's words, rather than your own, after working together. In a different vein, it is problematic when a student very often has an excuse, however understandable, for failing to turn something in, or for turning it in late. Excuses don't always excuse – often they merely explain.

There remain some difficult gray areas. For example, it verges on a breach of academic integrity (albeit not dishonesty, *per se*) to write a paper by stringing together a series of quotations of other people's work, even if you give appropriate credit. The helpful reminder here is that quotations and paraphrases of others' work should be used to illustrate and support your ideas; they should not constitute the bulk of the paper's content.

¹ 1 Arthur, Paul "Nine Letter Words Related to Academic Dishonesty" *The Nobleboro Daily Dishrag*, January 30, 2000, page 23.

Liberal quoting is sometimes called for, but be sure you do the important work of explaining the relevance of quoted passages rather than expecting the quoted material to do the work for you.

Further, it's worth thinking a bit about how and when you use secondary sources – where others have written about something you are studying. The most obvious examples are SparkNotes, Cliff Notes, and their web equivalents. In general, we would discourage you from consulting secondary sources in your classes. You will work closely with secondary sources during college, but it is important at this point in your educational career to develop your own ability to glean meaning, identify images, notice allusions to historical events or other writing (e.g. Biblical references), and recognize particular writing techniques. If you rely on secondary sources to tip you off about what you'll find in your readings you will deny yourself the opportunity to develop your own sensitivities and analytical abilities.

If you do consult secondary sources, you must give credit to them in your writing, even if you don't directly quote them. You can do this through an informal footnote or endnote.

What about online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia or Encyclopedia Britannica? Both are useful tools for a quick introduction to a topic, and both have suffered recent criticisms for inaccuracy. For our purposes, you should use these resources sparingly, if at all, mostly because we want you to apply your thought and your analysis during your Semester. The information in resources such as these is meant already to be distillations from a variety of sources. We would rather have you consult the original resources, draw the information together, glean what is most noteworthy for your project, discern patterns, highlight interesting interpretations, and weigh all of this for yourself. This is the work we hope you will do in conducting research. And if you must consult secondary sources, of course, cite them.

Finally, each of your teachers may have specific additional expectations. For example, foreign language instructors will have things to say about translation software and dictionaries. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand and follow all these expectations and guidelines.

FERPA Compliance Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA regulations require that local education agencies give annual notification to parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA (34 CFR § 99.7). The law does not require agencies to notify parents and eligible students individually, but agencies must provide notification where they are likely to see it. In addition, education institutions must make provisions to effectively inform individuals with a disability or whose primary language is not English.

The annual notification process must ensure that parents understand that they have the right to:

- inspect and review their child's record;
- seek to amend the record if they believe it to be inaccurate;
- consent (or not) to disclosures of personally identifiable information; and
- file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning the district's failures to comply with FERPA.

Either parent has the right to review an education record unless there is evidence of a court order or state law revoking or restricting these rights. Parents may access the education records of eligible students if they claim

the student as a dependent for income tax purposes. However, agencies may require verification of the requester's relationship with the child before providing access to records.

The right of parents to access information is limited to their own child or children. If the education record includes information about other students, that information must be removed prior to disclosure so that parents do not have access to any other child's records. (34 CFR § 99.12)

When parents (or eligible students) request to review their records, the education institution must respond within 45 days, even if these records are kept by an outside party acting for the school. During these 45 days, the education institution cannot destroy any of the requested records.

Knife Policy

Know and follow guidelines for safe use of personal pocket knives, which we incorporate as tools for crafts, fire prep and living in the natural world. Knives must be signed in upon arrival to the Art Room, and signed out when in use.

Pocket knives, utility knives, Exacto knives, and carving tools must be:

- Checked **out** and **in** with an adult
- Used sitting down
- Used for intent tool was created
- Used following best practices for tool
- Used with good lighting
- Used with a cutting mat

Best practices for cutting with utility knives, Exacto knives and carving tools:

1. Always cut on a table or other secure surface- **never** on your lap or in the palm of your hand.
2. **Make sure that no fingers, hands, or other body parts are in the path of the blade.**
3. **Always cut away from your body (do not cut towards yourself).**
4. Make sure your tool is the right one for the job. Instead of struggling with a first cut if your material is thick, score and make multiple shallower cuts.
5. Always use a benchhook when carving linoleum or wood.
6. Use a straightedge for cutting straight lines.
7. Close blade/put cover on when not in use.