



■ UPPER MERION VANTAGE ACADEMY

Handbook

Revised December 2021

Welcome to

On behalf of the staff, I would like to welcome you to Upper Merion (UMVA). Whether you are coming in at the beginning of the school year or sometime after the year has started, our desire is that you find Lakeside to be a place where you feel supported in your educational journey.

This handbook is a brief introduction to the school's policies. Its goal is to help all of us, staff members, parents, and students, be on the same page. It will help each of us as we endeavor to value and respect the rights of others. If you have questions about anything you read, please ask about it. Doors are always open to hear your suggestions and concerns.

We care about you! Whatever your past story, this is a new start. Begin by making a commitment to try again. We will do everything in our power to make UMVA a safe and comfortable place for you to learn. Whether your goals include further education, military goals, a career, or just returning to your public school as quickly as you can, know that UMVA alumni will be successfully walking all of these paths.

Best wishes on your journey,

Amanda Heintzelman

Director

Our Mission and Vision And NeuroLogic®

OUR MISSION

Lakeside Educational Network exists to empower youth and families to overcome difficulties and achieve success through quality educational and treatment services.

OUR VISION

Lakeside Educational Network, as a premier organization, will have national impact on youth and families by designing model programs, developing innovative services, providing professional training and advocating for solution-based care.

NEUROLOGIC®

For struggling students, success is often an elusive dream and failure a painful reality. Lakeside's brain-based, trauma-informed approach to serving young people alters that reality. When students perceive themselves as failures, they can react by withdrawing or acting out. Lakeside offers another option, one that leads to success today and in the future. Lakeside's therapeutic schools and services identify and address not only behaviors but also the real reasons students struggle and fail. We don't ask, "What's wrong with you?" The question is more often, "What happened to you?" Lakeside students learn successfully to take on the challenges they face. Our students realize hope and the possibility of altering and redefining the rest of their lives.

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Program Descriptions and Goals

Upper Merion is an alternative education placement designed for students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12). The program has a high academic emphasis commensurate with those offered in students' home schools. Academics are geared toward preparing students to succeed upon return to the student's home school. Class size is approximately fifteen (15) students. Individual and group counseling services, including a Resolve Room, are available to help students with individual issues and needs.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide students with the academic, behavioral, and social skills necessary for success in public school or post-secondary education
- To provide challenging academics taught with an approach and curriculum similar to that being used in the public school system
- To help students develop a sense of direction and purpose regarding their future academic and career pursuits
- To teach students to solve problems and issues appropriately without needing to be removed from the classroom setting
- To design a plan to help students transition successfully back to their public school.

Student Responsibilities

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of his fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process.

Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENTS TO CONFORM TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accord with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- Dress and groom so as to meet fair standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes.
- Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- Comply with commonwealth and local laws.
- Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
- Make up work when absent from school.
- Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by commonwealth and local school authorities.

Attendance Policy

Upper Merion students are required to be present every day school is in session. In order for students to realize the opportunities and benefits from school, it is important that students be in attendance. To achieve this, a collaborative effort between UMVA, its students and their families is essential.

The student's school day begins at 8:05 a.m. and ends at 2:10 p.m. Students who walk to school should plan to arrive between 8:00 a.m. and 8:05 a.m. Bus students should be at their stop 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. ONCE THE STUDENT ARRIVES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY WHETHER FROM WALKING OR TAKING THE BUS, THE STUDENT IS NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE SCHOOL PROPERTY. Students who arrive by bus must enter the building immediately and remain. Students who violate these rules will be subject to reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing, and will be deemed to have consented to be searched. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

ABSENCES

A student's parent/guardian must telephone UMVA at 484-674-3334 by 8:30 a.m. the day of the absence to verify their knowledge of the student's absence.

Within five (5) days of the absence, the student must present a parental excuse note to the UMVA counselor in order for the absence to be considered excused. If a student does not have a parental excuse note upon return from an absence, the student will be scheduled for goal-tending or study hall within the week. All absences beyond 15 days (unlawful and parent excused) require a written excuse from a doctor.

If a note is not turned in the absence is considered Unexcused (UX) or Unlawful (UL). Unlawful absences may be reported to the student's school district and referral

representative and result in zero points earned for that day and the resulting consequences.

Letters will be sent to the parent(s) and the home school district after the third unlawful absence.

Students of compulsory school age (currently between age 6 to age 18) who accumulate 3 Unlawful Absences will be required, with their parent(s) or guardian(s), to attend a meeting and develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). The student, parent(s) or guardian(s), UMVA counselor, Program Director and district representative may attend this meeting. Notification of this meeting will be sent to parent(s) by mail.

Students of compulsory school age who accumulate six (6) Unlawful Absences may be reported to the District Court as habitually truant. The students and their parents/guardians may have to appear before the District Magistrate.

Students not of compulsory school age, who accumulate 3 Unexcused Absences, may with their parent(s) or guardian, attend a meeting and develop a plan for improving attendance. The student, parent(s) or guardian(s), UMVA counselor, Program Director and district representative may attend this meeting.

In accordance with PA state law, students not of compulsory school age that are unexcused absent for 10 consecutive days will be automatically withdrawn from school.

Students absent for five (5) consecutive days or more will need verification from a medical professional to excuse the absence. It is recommended that parents obtain medical verification following three (3) consecutive absences.

Students who accumulate over 15 absences, excused or unexcused, must bring in a note from a doctor for any other subsequent absences.

Students who know they will be absent may bring in a note prior to the day they will be absent. This will be an Excused Absence (EX) as long as the reasoning for the absence is legitimate ex. funeral, college visit, etc.

CMTHS (TECH School) students must provide both UMVA and CMTHS attendance offices notes for absences.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The Public School Code of Pennsylvania and the State Board Regulations include a number of specific reasons for which a child may be excused from school for all or part of a school day. These include:

- Observance of religious holidays.
- Religious Instruction - Excused absences for religious instruction are restricted by law to a maximum of 36 hours per school year.
- College visitations approved by the counselor.
- Approved vacations.
- Health Care - Absence for a portion of the school day may be excused for a medical or dental appointment which cannot be arranged after school hours. Verification of the appointment from the doctor's office, stating date, time, duration of visit and purpose of visit, will be required upon the student's return to UMVA.
- Illness or recovery from an accident
- Quarantine of the home
- Death of an immediate family member (parent, sibling, grandparent, cousin, aunt, uncle)
- Family emergency (unavoidable)

LATENESS

- Students are considered late if they do not arrive at UMVA by 8:15 a.m.
- Students who are late must sign in at the front desk.
- Students bringing in a note from a parent explaining the lateness may be

excused from their lateness. If the students do not have a note the lateness will be considered unexcused.

- Students arriving to school after 11:27 p.m. without an excuse note will be charged with a full day absence. If a student is chronically late, a behavior plan may be implemented.
- Late minutes accrue. Students, who accumulate over 406 minutes of lateness, will be charged with a full day's unexcused absence. This absence would be subject to all consequences associated with unlawful absences.
- Absences and lateness are reported to the student's school district and referral representative.
- The attendance policy may be modified for out of district students based on the discretion of UMVA and the sending school district.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

A failing grade (F) will be assigned to those students who have fifteen absences. Once a student reaches fifteen absences they will have the opportunity to receive a passing grade for the marking period only by completing an independent study. Work completed during the marking period will be counted towards the independent study.

WANDERING

- Students are expected to be inside their classroom when the bell rings.
- Students are expected to remain inside class for the entire class period unless permission has been granted by staff member and/or a pass has been given. Students are not permitted to be wandering in the hallways during class time without a pass from a teacher or UMVA counselor. Students wandering in the hallways may be sent to the Resolve Room. Continuous wandering will be considered a discipline issue.

School Closing

Upper Merion parents and guardians will be notified by phone and/or text in the event of an unexpected closing due to inclement weather or other concerns.

District transportation departments may have their own policy for transporting your child during inclement weather. Contact your UMVA counselor or your district's transportation department for additional information.

Students from other districts should consult their district's transportation policies for school closing information.

If schools are closed or dismissed early, all extracurricular activities and other activities are canceled for that day.

To the best of our ability, parents and district transportation departments will be notified when school closes early. It will be the responsibility of the district and parent to provide alternative transportation and/or student supervision if school closes early.

Academics

GRADING

Grades will be used as an evaluative tool to motivate students toward success. Grade letter determinations will be based on Assessments 30%, Classwork 35%, Behavior Points 15% and Homework 20% for each marking period. The following scale will be used in determining the letter grade issued:

A = 90 -100 **B** = 80 - 89 **C** = 70 - 79 **D** = 65 - 69 **F** = 0 - 64

In the event that a student's grade is .5 or greater of the next percentage point, the grade will be rounded up.

The final grade will be based upon the four (4) marking period grades. Cumulative mid-terms and final exams are administered at UMVA and will be factored into the marking period grade when the exam is administered.

Grades are calculated based on assessments, class work, behavior points and homework.

Students and parents are free to contact the student's UMVA counselor at any time to obtain up to date information as to the student's current grades.

Upper Merion offers parents electronic access to their student's grades, which is provided through the parent portal in Power School and/or Schoology. Contact your student's UMVA counselor for log-in information to access the parent portal.

Honor Roll

Students will earn honor roll if they achieve all As and Bs during a marking period. Students will earn high honor roll if they achieve all As during a marking period.

Report Cards

Report Cards are issued at the end of each of the four (4) marking periods. Report Cards are sent home with the student as well as mailed home to the parent(s) or guardians.

Incomplete Grades

Students who, because of illness or other extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete their class work by the end of the marking period may receive a grade of Incomplete (I). This work should be completed no later than two (2) weeks after the end of the marking period at which point the earned letter grade will be awarded.

Interim Reports

Midway through each marking period, parents will be notified in writing concerning their student's academic progress. This is to provide time to make appropriate adjustments when a student is failing a class. Interim reports are given to the student at school and a copy is also mailed home.

Academic Support

If a student desires extra academic help, arrangements can be made through his/her teacher or UMVA counselor. Classroom teachers may elect to meet with the student before school, during recreation time or after school.

Homework

Students at UMVA are given approximately an hour of homework to be completed each night, Monday through Thursday. Every attempt is made to make homework meaningful, relevant, and enriching. Students who are absent should expect to make up assignments upon their return to school. When homework is assigned, students should complete it with the care and diligence expected of other class work.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Dishonesty, in tests or class work, and plagiarism are serious offenses. The following policy regarding student cheating has been adopted: Any student who is found to be cheating may receive a zero (0) for the test, quiz, mid-year or final exam, term paper, book report, etc.

The teacher will notify the student's UMVA counselor. The UMVA counselor will call the parents of the student within three days to inform them of the incident.

Credit Requirements

Students who attend UMVA will receive a diploma from their home school pending the completion of required credits. Each student must meet certain requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Board of School Directors of your home district. A program of studies will be designed by the Educational Director to assist you in meeting your requirements for graduation. To the best of our ability UMVA will assist our students in receiving the credits required by their district towards graduation.

Earning a diploma from the home school is our preferred outcome; however, Upper Merion is a Licensed Private School through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and can, therefore, award diplomas to students meeting the graduation requirements. The graduation requirements for Upper Merion are:

SUBJECT	CREDITS
English.....	4.0
Social Studies	4.0
Mathematics.....	3.0
Science	3.0
Health/Physical Education.....	1.0
Arts/Humanities.....	2.0
Electives.....	3.5
Graduation Project	0.5
TOTAL.....	21.0

Students must complete all academic requirements, including the senior graduation project, to be eligible for the diploma and to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

To the best of our ability, Upper Merion will assist our out of district students in receiving the credits towards graduation that are required by their district.

Independent Study Courses

Independent study courses may be available to those students needing to earn additional credit in their major subjects. This option is at the discretion of the Director of Education and the sending school district. Students who are in need of additional credits should contact the Director of Education for further information.

Minors

Upper Merion offers a number of minors each year. Minors are assigned to students based upon credit needs and program availability as determined by the Director of Education.

Work-Study

Students in their junior and senior year who are already employed may apply to earn academic credits through a work-study model. Students who are interested in this program should contact the Director of Education.

Working Papers

All persons under 18 years of age must obtain working papers for employment. Please contact your home school district to obtain working papers.

Bell Schedule

Arrival	8:05	8:15
Period 1	8:17	9:06
Period 2	9:08	9:57
Period 3	9:59	10:48
Period 4	10:50	11:39
Lunch	11:41	12:01
Period 5	12:03	12:52
Period 6	12:54	1:43
Rec/Goal Tending	1:45	2:10

Extracurricular Activities

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Students interested in any extracurricular activities should inform their UMVA counselor of their desire to participate. Eligibility is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and is dependent upon the students' having acceptable academic and behavioral standing at UMVA, referral reason and at district discretion.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are representatives of the school when they participate in extracurricular activities. All students are expected to represent themselves, their families, their activity, and their school favorably at all times.

Health Services

Day to day nursing services are not available at Upper Merion . If a student is deemed too sick to stay in school, as evidenced by a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, the student's UMVA counselor will contact home, the parent, or emergency alternative.

Accidents and illnesses that occur at home or outside of the school are the responsibilities of the parent and should not be referred to the school.

The State of Pennsylvania requires that every student must be seen each year for height, weight, and vision screening. Students in 11th grade are given a hearing screening also. Hearing screenings may be completed for any other student upon request of parent, teacher, or the student. Students in 11th grade and any student entering a Pennsylvania school for the first time are required to have a physical examination. Upper Merion School District may mail home forms so students can have the examination done by their family physician. Students who do not return the Report by a Private Physician may be scheduled for an examination by a school physician. Parents will be notified of the date of the examination by UMASD.

Students must also be fully immunized according to state guidelines.

MEDICATION POLICY

The major responsibility for administering medications to students relies with the parents. Parents are encouraged to arrange medication schedules outside the school day whenever possible. When necessary, a student's UMVA counselor can administer medications when the following guidelines are adhered to:

With a parent's signed permission on the medical emergency form, the student's UMVA counselor can administer acetaminophen (such as Tylenol), antacids (such as Tums), Benadryl, and cough drops at their discretion.

Most prescription medications need to be administered at home. For the few

prescription medications the UMVA approves for admission, a physician's order and written parental permission to administer the medication must be on file. The prescription medication must be given to the student's UMVA counselor by the parent/guardian in the pharmacy container with the directions for dispensing printed on it.

No medications will be accepted in envelopes or "baggies." Students are not permitted to carry medications for self-administration without specific permission from the physician and parent. Students found with OTC or prescription medication on their persons will incur disciplinary action.

Transportation Services

CONDUCT ON BUSES AND VANS

Students are to conduct themselves appropriately while riding the bus to and from school. Students found in violation of any school rules, or found guilty in other ways of improper behavior on bus, may be referred to the Behavior Manager for disciplinary consequences and may lose the privilege of transportation.

AUTOMOBILE USE

Parking in Upper Merion's parking lot is a privilege granted by the school. In addition to obeying all signs posted and all laws of the Commonwealth of PA, a person who drives to school must abide by the following:

- A copy of the student's drivers license, UMVA driver's form, and insurance card will be provided to the UMVA counselor.
- Students who drive may not transport other students without the written parental permission from each student's parent or guardian.

- Students are not permitted to loiter in or around the cars, or access them during the school day.
- A search of the car may occur given suspicion of illegal or inappropriate activity.
- Cars should be kept locked at all times while parked. It is suggested that valuable items not be left on the seats or otherwise visible areas of the car.
- Any violation of the above regulations will result in:
 - The loss of the privilege of parking in UMVA's lot. Constant violations will result in the loss of the privilege permanently. Parents will be notified if the privilege is revoked.
 - Suspension from school for serious consistent violations.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY FOR “HALF-DAY” STUDENTS

Some UMVA students take classes in a “second school” such as a technical or trade school or the student’s home school. The following list outlines normal transportation procedures between UMVA and the second school.

- If UMVA is open (whether for the entire day or with an early dismissal), and the second school is open, the student’s home district may provide transportation.
- If UMVA is closed for the day, but the second school is open, it is the parent(s) responsibility to arrange for transportation to the second school. If this is not feasible, an excused absence from the second school will be provided.
- If UMVA is open (whether for the entire day or with an early dismissal), but the second school is closed, it is the parent(s) responsibility to arrange for transportation home.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

At certain times, students may be transported off school property. Examples of such times include rewards for positive behavior or academics or school trips. Written permission will be obtained for school trips over 10 miles. Transportation for trips will be on district buses and/or Lakeside vans.

Per the participation agreement form signed at enrollment, students may be transported within a 10-mile radius for reward trips without specific permission. Parents will be notified of such trips afterwards during weekly phone calls. To assist students with regulation and/or provide clinical support outside an office setting, students and staff may also utilize the local community for walks and local activities.

Behavior System

The purpose of the Behavior Management System at is to help students take responsibility for their behavior and develop habits that will enable them to be successful in life. This system includes:

POINT SYSTEM

Appropriate behavior will be recognized and rewarded each period by an accumulation of points. A maximum of 5 points can be earned during each of six (6) class periods. Points can only be earned; they cannot be lost.

Points are earned for appropriately fulfilling the following expectations:

- Being prepared.....1 point
- Following directions..... 1 point
- Respectful interaction.....1 point
- Completing work1 point
- Effort..... 1 point

Level System

BASICS LEVELS

All students will begin the Level System on the Basics Level. Students' point totals each day will determine their level (NOTE: Points needed to obtain levels are prorated if the day is shortened).

Level/Step	Points Needed
Basics 1 (B1)	0-16
Basics 2 (B2)	17-24
Basics 3 (B3)	25-30

Basics Level 3 (B3) indicates that the student is exhibiting appropriate behavior indicated by earning the majority of daily points as described above. If a student is absent for the day, he or she will not earn points. This will affect a student's growth level status. Furthermore, if a student returns from an absence without a parental excuse note, he or she will earn zero points for the day.

Recreation time is available each day; however, students showing a pattern of concern in academics, behavior, attendance, resolve room use, etc. may be scheduled support to remediate such skill deficit(s). This support will occur during recreation time.

GROWTH LEVELS

In order to advance to Growth Levels, the student must show the following:

- **Growth Level 1 (G1)** Demonstrate consistent appropriate behavior indicated by maintaining ten consecutive days on Basics 3.
- **Growth Level 2 (G2)** Growth Level 1 requirements, along with responsibility as indicated by completing a service project and staff assessment. Projects are usually long term and of benefit to the student and the school.
- **Growth Level 3 (G3)** Growth Level 2 requirements and leadership as indicated by continuing an ongoing responsibility project within the program, showing support for other students and staff, in addition to earning positive staff evaluations.

For more specific information regarding Growth Levels see your UMVA counselor.

COLLABORATION LEVELS

UMVA uses a variety of intervention strategies in order to help students succeed within the program. One of the purposes of the growth levels and point system is to provide data regarding skill deficits and student success. When skill deficits are noted, staff and students will collaborate to resolve the issue(s) in order for students to successfully progress within the program.

INTERVENTION LEVELS

Upper Merion Vantage Academy Collaborative Problem Solving/Intervention System

Collaboration Level	Examples (list is not all inclusive)	Possible Collaborative /Intervention Responses (list is not all inclusive)
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Off task behaviors -Minor class disruptions -Failure to comply with staff directions -Disrespectful language or interactions with others -Not following school rules or classroom procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use of prompt hierarchy from least to most restrictive -Alternative seating options -Brain Break (individual or class) -Student use of regulation area in classroom -Student takes short break from instruction outside of classroom or to meet with counselor -Collaborative problem solving with teacher and/or counselor
Resolve Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Failure to Follow School rules -Cell Phone Violation -Disrupting Class (class disruptions that impede the learning of others) -Drug & Alcohol Awareness -Drug Talk -Disrespect to Staff/Peers -Horseplay (physical, verbal, emotional) -Inappropriate Language -Inappropriate Interaction -Repeated Not Following Directions -Refusing to attend class -Sexually Inappropriate language -Suspicion of Smoking -Walking out of class -Wandering/Time and Place /Continued lateness to class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative problem solving with Resolve Room counselor -Brain regulating activities -Meeting with counselor and/or clinical supervisor -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Develop individual behavior intervention plan
Extended Resolve (ER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continuation in frequency and/or intensity of above -Inability or refusal to participate in resolve level interventions -Vandalism -Posturing -Leaving school property without permission -Continual failure to follow school rules -Threatening Comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative problem solving with Resolve Room counselor -Brain regulating activities -Meeting with counselor and/or clinical supervisor -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Develop individual behavior intervention plan -Campus community service -Restitution for property damages which may include fines -Parent notification -School district and/or probation notification -Peer mediation -Time restitution (lunch or after-school) -Escort

<p>Intervention Level 1 (L1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased intensity and/or frequency of previously addressed behaviors of concern -Inability or refusal to participate in resolve level interventions (including refusing to report to resolve) -Continued threats and/or intimidation of others -Physical aggression or fighting -Harassment (racial, sexual) -Blatant Smoking (student chooses to continue after asked to stop) -Theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent and district contact -Team meeting to include district and parents -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Review/revise individual behavior intervention plan -Meeting with counselor and/or behavior management supervisor -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Restitution for property damages which may include fines -Alternative to Suspension Program (ATS) -Lunch and/or After-school time restitution -Out of school suspension (1 day)
<p>Intervention Level 2 (L2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased intensity and/or frequency of previously addressed behaviors of concern -Drug or alcohol violations -Assault/battery (one sided fight) -Threatening/striking school employee -Extortion -Threats of/intent to destroy property -Possession of a weapon -Inability or refusal to participate in L1 interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent and district contact -Team meeting to include district and parents -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Review/revise individual behavior intervention plan -Meeting with counselor and/or behavior management supervisor -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Restitution for property damages which may include fines -After school time restitution -Out of school suspension (2-3 Days)
<p>Intervention Level 3 (L3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased intensity and/or frequency of previously addressed behaviors of concern -Failure to adjust to Lakeside program -Inability or refusal to participate in L2 level interventions -Possession of illegal drugs with intent to distribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent and district contact -Team meeting to include district and parents to discuss change in school placement -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Review/revise individual behavior intervention plan -Meeting with counselor and/or behavior management supervisor -Restorative and/or conflict resolution meeting with staff member or other student(s) -Restitution for property damages which may include fines -Out of school suspension (3-5 days)

RESOLVE ROOM

A full time counselor is available in the Resolve Room to aid students in appropriately resolving problems and conflicts. Students will be sent to the Resolve Room when they are unable to manage their behavior within the classroom setting or when they become disruptive to any aspect of the program.

Although there is no punishment for being sent to the Resolve Room, there is the consequence of not being able to earn points until returning to class. While in the Resolve Room the student will, with the assistance of the Resolve Room Counselor, develop a plan to resolve the issue for which the student was sent. In order to return to class, the student must make a commitment to follow the plan.

If the conflict resolution does not take place while in the Resolve Room, the student may be:

1. Referred to a UMVA counselor.
2. Sent home with an unresolved or out of school suspension.
3. Calmly remain in the Resolve Room until a commitment is provided.
4. Provided a behavior contract (plan) that the student will assist in creating.

Vantage Academy Rules

The following are prohibited at UMVA:

- Unexcused and/or unlawful absences from school.
- Use, possession, or destructive discussion of drugs and alcohol or paraphernalia.
- Fighting, threats of physical harm, excessive horseplay and weapons.
- Blatant refusal to report to Resolve Room when directed.
- Damaging, defacing or theft of school property.

- Smoking or possession of cigarettes, vape or illicit substances.
- Obscene language and gestures, cursing, swearing, and instigating comments.
- Leaving school property without permission.
- Being in designated off-limits areas

BACKPACKS: Students are expected to use clear backpacks on campus. The first clear bag will be provided. Students can purchase additional clear bags from Upper Merion or any other distributor.

Student Rights

(PA Department of Public Welfare 55 PA Code Chapter 3800.)

- A student and the student’s family have the right to lodge grievances with Lakeside (the Parent company of Upper Merion) for an alleged violation of specific or civil rights without fear of retaliation.
- A student has the right not to be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, disability, handicap, ancestry, sexual orientation, national origin, age or sex.
- A student has the right not to be abused, mistreated, threatened, harassed, or to be subjected to corporal punishment.
- A student has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- A student has the right to be informed of the rules of Upper Merion .
- A student has the right to communicate with others by telephone subject to reasonable facility policy.
- A student has the right to communicate and visit privately with an attorney or clergy.

- A student has the right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure.
- A student has the right to practice the religion or faith of choice, or not to practice any religion or faith.
- A student has the right to rehabilitation and treatment.
- A student has the right to be free from excessive medication.
- A student may not be subjected to unusual or extreme methods of discipline that may cause physical or psychological harm.
- A student may not be deprived of specific or civil rights.
- A student's rights may not be used as reward or sanctions.

Grievance Policy & Procedure

■ **Policy** In accordance with Lakeside's commitment to treating every student with dignity and respect and protecting his/her rights, Lakeside aims to resolve problems and grievances promptly and as close to the source as possible with graduated steps for further discussions and resolution at higher levels of authority.

■ Principles

- A grievance is a student's expression of his/her belief that there has been a violation of his/her rights, an expressed policy or the content of the school handbook.
- Complaints must be fully described by the person with the grievance.
- A student will in no way be penalized for using the Grievance Policy.
- The Grievance Procedure will be followed confidentially, fairly and without undue delay.

■ **Procedure** The following is a four (4) level process:

The student presents his/her grievance to his/her Counselor.

- The Counselor attempts to facilitate a resolution of the student's grievance as close to the source as possible.
- This level is quite informal and verbal.

If the matter is not resolved or involves the student's Counselor:

The student notifies the Counselor's Supervisor as to the substance of the grievance and states the remedy sought.

- The Supervisor meets with the student and any other relevant persons.
- This level is usually informal, but either party may request written statements and agreements.
- This level should not exceed one (1) week.

If the matter is not resolved:

The Supervisor refers the matter to the Program Director.

- A grievance taken to this level must be in writing from the student.
- The Supervisor also forwards to the Program Director any additional information relevant to the matter.
- The Program Director meets with the student and any other relevant persons and/or provides a written response to the student.
- The Program Director also communicates with any other persons involved or deemed relevant.
- This level should not exceed one (1) week.

If the matter is not resolved:

The student is advised of his/her rights to pursue the matter with external authorities if desired.

Transition to Home School

The goal of Upper Merion is to prepare students for a successful transition back to his/her home school. Students who have achieved both their academic and behavior goals at may be considered for a transition back to his/her home school.

Transitions are designed on a case by case basis based on the individual needs of the student and district discretion. Student and parental involvement is an integral part of the transition process.

Drugs and Alcohol

Drug and alcohol abuse are major problems confronting our society and our community. A clear policy on drug and alcohol abuse is set forth for Upper Merion .

STUDENTS SEEKING HELP

A primary concern of Upper Merion is to help those students with drug and/or alcohol problems. To this end, students are encouraged to seek help. The following services and resources are available to students at .

UMVA counselors are available during weekly counseling sessions to help students deal with drug and alcohol problems.

Referral services are available to those students needing help beyond the jurisdiction of the school.

ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIALITY SHALL BE EXTENDED TO STUDENTS SEEKING HELP, IT CANNOT BE EXTENDED TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED FOR ILLEGAL USE OR POSSESSION OF DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL.

ILLEGAL USE OF DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL ON THE PROPERTY

Students are reminded that drug and/or alcohol use or possession is illegal. Therefore, the use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol on or around the Upper Merion 's property or during school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

All incidents concerning the suspected use, possession, transportation or distribution of drugs or alcohol by students shall be reported to the Behavior Manager. Any student who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol is subject to a search and seizure by a same sex staff person. Parents will be notified of search and any action taken.

If a Behavior Manager and UMVA counselor make the judgment that a student is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the student will be sent home. Any student needing immediate emergency treatment shall be transferred to the nearest medical facility. The student may be accompanied by a school official designated by the Program Director.

Parents shall be promptly informed of the school's actions; they shall be notified of all incidents and subsequent action taken by the school and by medical officials on the case.

The illegal use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol on school property or during school sponsored activities shall be reported to the local law enforcement officials and shall be considered the basis for suspension and/or the recommendation for expulsion.

Any student found with illegal drugs and/or alcohol may also be subject to discipline consequences based on the sending district's discipline policy.

SELLING, TRANSPORTING OR DISTRIBUTING DRUGS

Selling, transporting or distributing drugs and/or alcohol or OTC medicine on school property or attempting to sell, transport or distribute same on school property or during school sponsored activities shall be subjected to the same penalties described for the use of illegal drugs. In situations where the substance is not a controlled substance, the intent to sell, transport, distribute or buy it as such warrants the same procedures and penalties described for illegal activities.

SEARCHES

Students who are involved or suspected of being involved in illegal, unsafe activities or have items banned from campus may be subjected to a personal search based on reasonable cause. Illegal property may be confiscated and used as evidence. Parents will be notified of all searches that occurred and action taken.

Smoking and Tobacco Possession

The Clean Indoor Air Act 27 of 2008 prohibits students from possessing or using tobacco in a school building or on school property.

On February 20, 1989, a state law passed by the legislature went into effect. Section 3.5 "School Tobacco Control" states, "Tobacco use by pupil is prohibited in school buildings and on school buses and on school property." Section (e) states, "Smoking includes possession of a cigarette, cigar, pipe, vape or other lighted smoking equipment. Tobacco use includes smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form. Smoking by students is not permitted on school grounds or in vehicles on school grounds" or within 50 feet of the school building, parking lot or school property.

SMOKING OR POSSESSION OF CIGARETTES, VAPE PENS, OR OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS IS PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS, SCHOOL BUSES AND ON SCHOOL PROPERTY. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE TO BE OBSERVED IN MAINTAINING THIS RULE.

POSSESSION OF CIGARETTES

(INCLUDING VAPE PENS AND ALL TOBACCO PRODUCTS)

If a student is found to be in possession of cigarettes or vape pens, the cigarettes or vape pens that are found will be confiscated and disposed. If the student refuses to relinquish the cigarettes or vape pen, or if cigarettes and vape pens on campus is a continued concern, further actions will occur.

SMOKING ON OR AROUND CAMPUS AND/OR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The consequence for smoking on school grounds may include, but not be limited to, extended time in the resolve room, searches, assistance via a plan to prevent the behavior from recurring, suspensions and possible police citations.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement

With full awareness of and the attention to individual rights and the differences in purpose and function between the school and law enforcement agencies, it shall be the policy of Upper Merion to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies in keeping our communities safe.

Harassment

It is the policy of that racial, sexual, religious or ethnic harassment and violence will not be tolerated under any circumstances. We firmly believe that all persons are to be treated with respect and dignity. Harassment and violent incidents will be responded to in a manner that effectively deters future incidents.

Racial, sexual, religious or ethnic harassment and violence refers to a power differential where continued unwelcome and unwanted behavior related to sex, race, religion, or ethnic group that makes the recipient feel afraid, embarrassed, helpless, angry or unsafe, or upsets the recipient to the point that he/she cannot learn, cannot teach or be effective at school or at his/her job.

Harassment and violence is prohibited between staff members, between staff members and students, between students, and from members of the public directed at students or staff on school property or at school-sponsored events. Some examples of harassment and violence include: unwelcome patting, pinching, or physical contact of any kind, obscene gesturing, name-calling or labeling (such as “gay”), ethnic or racial slurs, threats, insults, or assaults against someone due to their sex, race, religion or ethnic group.

If a staff member or student feels that his/her emotional wellbeing, his/her sense of safety and security or sense of self-worth is being affected by such conduct a complaint should be filed by contacting any UMVA counselor or the Program Director.

Weapons Policy

Possession or transfer of weapons on school property is prohibited. Appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken against any student who possesses weapons, or who assists possession in anyway. For the purposes of this policy, weapons are defined in Section 1317.2 of the school code of 1949, as amended, and shall include but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury.

Vandalism and/or Theft

The school is a community and damage to or theft of school or personal property is an injury to all members of the school community. Deliberate destruction of or theft of school or personal property may result in suspension from school. The injured party may pursue restitution, and notification to the police of such incidents, if indicated. Students who commit repeated offenses of theft or vandalism may be recommended for expulsion.

Gambling and Sales/Exchange of items

Gambling and sale/exchange of items of any type is prohibited on school property. All such incidents will be reported to the Behavior Manager for investigation and disciplinary action.

Dress Code

Upper Merion is committed to maintaining an overall environment conducive to the development and maintenance of positive growth and progress. Student dress must meet community and legal standards of health, safety, and modesty, and may not substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school. Therefore, the following guidelines pertaining to student dress and decorum are to be observed.

Any article of clothing that depicts alcohol, drugs, sex, vulgarity or inappropriate language or graphic violence are prohibited at Upper Merion. Also prohibited are any articles of clothing that deride or denigrate others. This include hats, shirts, buttons, etc.

Students are also expected to cover their bodies appropriately. This means no cropped shirt exposing the midriff, excessively short pants or skirts, or shredded jeans.

If students are inadequately attired, they will be referred to the Behavior Manager or a UMVA counselor for further action and/or consequences.

If students come to school wearing a prohibited item, they will be directed to reverse it or conceal it by any staff member observing them. If students refuse to cooperate, they will be directed to the Resolve Room in order to resolve the conflict.

Any repetition of these behaviors will also result in contact with parents to further resolve the matter.

School Breakfast and Lunch Program

Out-of-district students may be eligible for reduced rate breakfast and lunches if the home district has partnered with Upper Merion Food Services regarding this option. If not, out-of-district students may choose to purchase lunch at the full rate or provide their breakfast and lunch from home. Out-of-district full pay lunch purchasers should make checks payable to Upper Merion Food Services.

Breakfast and lunch can be ordered directly through the Upper Merion School District's School Cafe' System. Contact the UMVA Counselor if you desire additional information regarding this process.

Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately in the cafeteria. All rules and regulations of Upper Merion apply during lunchtime. Lunch detention may be enforced for students who have shown to be unable to conduct themselves appropriately during this time.

When staffing allows, a 'quiet lunch' area will be available for students uncomfortable in the larger cafeteria environment.

Food and Drink

Due to the limited time for breakfast in the morning, students may have food and beverages in their first period class. Discrete snacks may also be eaten throughout the day if a student chooses to bring food from home. This privilege may be revoked if it shows a pattern of disrupting the class environment. If a student chooses to bring open containers to UMVA, they may be examined by staff.

Food Service - Frequently Asked Questions

Who provides food services at Upper Merion Vantage Academy?

The Upper Merion Area School District Food Services Department.

How much do meals cost?

The cost of breakfast is \$2.75, and the cost of lunch is \$3.25. Reduced meals are .30 for breakfast and .40 for lunch.

Due to COVID-19, the government has provided free breakfast and lunch for all students during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

How do I apply for free or reduced cost meals?

Complete the application at www.schoolcafe.com. When completing the application, regardless of your school district of residence, indicate Montgomery as your county and Upper Merion Area School District as your school district. (Several area school districts cooperate with Upper Merion Area School District's Food Services Department to offer free and reduced cost meals to eligible students.)

How do I pay for lunch or breakfast?

Although you are permitted to pay cash at the time you place your order, it is preferred that you pay for one (1) week of meals in advance. Checks, made payable to UMASD Food Services, or cash can be given to your Counselor. If you are an UMASD student, payments to your meal account can be made at www.schoolcafe.com.

What is on the daily breakfast menu?

Typically, a variety of offerings are available including a selection of cold cereals, breakfast sandwiches, and other breakfast foods.

How do I know what is on the lunch menu each day?

The breakfast and lunch menus are available on School Cafe' each day.

When is breakfast served?

Breakfast is available between 8:05 am and 8:12 am each day. Breakfast may be eaten in your 1st period class.

When must I order my meals?

Breakfast and lunch must be ordered by 9:00 am each day. You may still order through your School Cafe' account prior to 9:00 am. Orders are for that day's lunch and the following day's breakfast.

What if I do not order or bring my lunch to school?

You may be provided with an alternative option. Currently, all student meals are free due to COVID-19. Once this support ends, if a student wants a complete meal and has no money in their account, they are welcome to have one. The meal will be charged to their account and payment will be expected. Pennsylvania law prohibits us from discussing lunch account balances with students under a certain grade. Please be aware of your child's account balance and keep the balance to a minimum.

Bathroom Guidelines

Students are expected to be in classes as scheduled. A bathroom policy is enforced to assist in the safety of the students, program and to ensure that students are engaged in the learning environment for the maximum amount of time each day. Please talk to your UMVA counselor or the supervisor of educational services if you have any questions regarding the bathroom policy.

Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device (PED) Policy

Possession of a cell phone or other electronic communication devices during the school day is a privilege granted by the school. Students may carry a cell phone, concealed during the school day (The school day begins when the student enters the school building in the morning and concludes when he or she gets on the bus at the end of the day). Electronic devices include cell phones, ipods, tablets, MP3, etc. and will be referred to in this section as a personal electronic device (PED).

- Cell phones/PED use is prohibited at Upper Merion during classes, extended learning, The resolve room, Goal tending, Study Hall, group, counseling sessions and other structured times. Students who use a cell phone during structured times will be asked to surrender it.
 - First offense: The student will be sent to the resolve room. Behavior or clinical staff will explain the cell phone policy, collaboratively problem solve, encourage the proper use of the cell phone/PED and help facilitate its safe keeping voluntarily for the remainder of the school day.

- Second Offense: The phone will be confiscated by the resolve room counselor. It will be returned to the student at the end of that school day.
 - Third offense: The phone will be confiscated and the student will be required to relinquish the phone to a behavior or clinical staff member each morning upon arrival to school. It will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. (See 'how to regain cell phone/PED privileges below)
 - For any subsequent offense, the phone will be confiscated, a disciplinary meeting (with the parent) will be scheduled and the phone will be returned to the student's parent at the disciplinary meeting. The student may lose the privilege of bringing his/her cell phone to school indefinitely.
 - A student may regain cell phone privileges by earning and maintaining growth level for five consecutive school days.
- Students can use their own cell phone to text messages in the cafeteria during arrival, lunch and recreation time. Students may text between classes (but not in the hallways while classes are in session). A student is permitted to have and listen to a cell phone/PED on the bus while riding to and from school.
 - Students may not carry or use another student's cell phone/PED.
 - Video-taping on campus is prohibited at all times and will be considered at minimum a cell phone violation. Additional consequences may also occur.
 - Any student bringing a cell phone/PED to school does so at his/her own risk. If a student is asked to surrender a device, reasonable efforts will be made to insure its safekeeping. However, staff, whether holding a student's PED or not, are in no way responsible for it if it is damaged, lost, or stolen.

Responsible Computer Use

Upper Merion provides 1:1 computers for students as described and agreed to on the Technology Lending Agreement. Student users of computers are responsible for their behavior and communications over the network. Network administrators may review student files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. User files, stored on servers are the property of the school and are not private. Access is a privilege, not a right, and entails responsibility.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT PERMITTED:

- Using the network for other than school purposes.
- Sending or displaying offensive messages and pictures.
- Visiting any social networking sites websites, including but not limited to Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.
- Using obscene language.
- Harassing, insulting, or attacking others.
- Damaging computers, the computer system, or computer networks.
- Violating copyright laws.
- Using other's passwords.
- Trespassing in other's folders, work, or files.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources.
- Employing the network for commercial purposes.

Additional information can be found in the Acceptable Use Policy for students, which is provided at enrollment. This policy will be enforced for all students.

Consequences: Violations may result in a loss of access. When reviewed in conjunction with existing school rules regarding appropriate language and behavior, additional disciplinary action may result. When applicable, law enforcement agencies will be involved.

Fire Drill Procedure

- The class should leave the building through the appropriate exit.
- The class should remain with the teacher or Counselor at all times.
- The class should exit quietly so that directions can be heard.
- Any students temporarily out of class (bathroom, water fountain, etc.) should proceed through the nearest exit and proceed to the nearest UMVA staff.
- Staff will close and lock room doors as they exit.
- Staff will lead classes to the parking lot or back lot where they will await a signal from the Program Director(s) that they may return to their rooms.
- Classes will remain separated from other classes and with their teacher or counselor during the fire drill.
- Points will continue to be earned during the fire drill.
- Classes will return to the building when directed by the Program Director.

Field Trip Policy and Program Activities

A parent/guardian shall be notified in writing one week in advance of a field trip unless a student earns Growth Level after the initial notification occurs. The parent/guardian must sign and return the notice regarding the field trip before the

pupil is permitted to participate. At certain times, parental permission via phone call may be accepted in lieu of the permission slip.

Field trips must be approved by the Program Director or designee prior to notification of students/parents.

UMVA shall provide transportation to and from the destination of the field trip. Pupils shall pay admission fees where required. However, no pupil shall be denied the opportunity to participate in a field trip because the parents/guardians are unable to afford the full admission fee.

If a parent/guardian or staff believes that it would not be in the best interest of the pupil to participate in a field trip or program activity, parent/guardian will be notified of the arrangements that have been made with the approval of the program director.

The following ratio of staff to pupils for field trips is required: 1 staff member for every 10 students.

FIELD TRIP - HEALTH CONCERNS

Student health needs must be identified and considered by the student and parent/guardian prior to committing to a field trip.

LAKESIDE SCHOOL

VANTAGE ACADEMIES

GIRLS ACADEMY

VANTAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

E-LEARNING PROGRAM

MOBILE SUPPORT PROGRAM

IN-SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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Nondiscrimination in services: admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of students shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex. Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available.