ARTS ACADEMY IN THE WOODS

Student Code of Conduct & Parent Handbook

Academic Year 2026–2027

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1. Mission and Vision of the Arts Academy

1.1 Our Mission

Arts Academy in the Woods prepares our graduates to pursue the highest level of success in their post-secondary artistic, academic, vocational, and community lives.

1.2 Our Vision

Arts Academy in the Woods embodies the following core pillars:

- Provides excellence in an integrated arts and academics education with high standards that challenge all students.
- Embodies a safe and healthy physical and emotional environment that promotes inclusion and respect for individuality and diversity.
- Believes that effective communication among stakeholders, especially engaged listening, is essential to the successful development of our school.
- Supports and guides the student as artist through exploration, freedom of choice and expression, and frequent opportunities to showcase talents.
- Offers a unique educational experience in Southeastern Michigan that prepares students for post-secondary and vocational success with a lifelong appreciation for art and learning.
- Staff embrace continuous learning with a passion for their content and the arts, while incorporating life skills and character development in their instruction.
- Cultivates and nurtures the highest expectations for performance and behavior throughout our community.

2. Code of Conduct Statement

The success of each student is a responsibility shared by all members of our society. The Arts Academy in the Woods recognizes that the main responsibility for student success rests with the school, the home, and the individual student. As a school citizen, each student has certain rights, privileges, and responsibilities. An effective school organization must include fair rules that will protect the rights of all and permit the educational process to proceed in an orderly fashion.

Parents must prepare students by fostering a positive attitude toward learning as well as ensuring regular attendance and appropriate behavior. The school must provide an environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning. This publication ensures that students have full knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and clearly understand the consequences of behaviors that infringe on others' rights.

This code applies to all student behaviors occurring on any school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or related to events occurring on school property or school-related activities. We believe that students should be recognized for good conduct and that misconduct will result in disciplinary, corrective, and/or legal action against the student.

3. Privileges, Rights, and Responsibilities

The Constitution of the United States, through the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments, gives all citizens, including students, certain rights. An individual's rights are preserved only by the protection and preservation of others' rights. Students are responsible for exercising their rights appropriately, accepting consequences for their actions, and recognizing the boundaries of their rights.

3.1 Student Privileges

- **Graduation Participation:** Participating in commencement exercises and traditional senior farewell activities is a privilege granted to students who fulfill all graduation requirements.
- **Student Driving:** Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 may drive motorized vehicles and park in designated student parking areas, provided they abide by Academy parking regulations.
- **Extracurricular Participation:** Participation in extracurricular activities and field trips is a privilege granted by the Academy.

3.2 Academic and Artistic Probation

Academic and curricular artistic achievements are top priorities. Administration may place a newly admitted or currently enrolled student on academic probation if the student fails one or more academic courses in a previous term, or carries less than a 'B' average in artistic/academic courses with excessive absences.

- Students on probation will receive a written performance agreement outlining expectations.
- Students on academic probation are declared ineligible from participating in extracurricular activities during the probationary term.
- A failing grade at the end of a semester results in loss of credit, placement on academic probation, and requirement of credit recovery.
- Formal appeals regarding probation or ineligibility may be submitted in writing to the principal.

3.3 Extending High School Beyond Four Years

While most students complete high school in four years, students benefiting from additional instruction may return under specific criteria:

- Extenuating circumstances warranting additional instruction.
- A agreed written plan signed by the student, parent, and administration prior to instruction.
- Student is not older than 20 years of age by September 1st of the start of instruction.
- Demonstrated recent academic progress, satisfactory attendance, and disciplinary compliance.

3.4 Student Rights

- **Education:** Quality education and opportunity to earn a diploma, with orderly avenues to seek policy changes.
- **Expression & Speech:** Right to express personal opinions in publications provided statements are non-libelous, non-profane, and compliant with editorial policy.
- **Press:** Conveying information with accuracy and insight in accordance with constitutional guidelines.
- **Petition:** Collecting signatures without disrupting classroom procedures or educational processes.
- **Assembly:** Peaceful assembly at appropriate times and places without operational interference.
- **Student Property:** Personal property respect. Valuable items brought to school remain the sole responsibility of the student.
- **Access to Files:** Pursuant to FERPA (1974), parents/guardians and adult students may inspect official educational records upon request.

3.5 Rights of the Academy

Pursuant to Michigan Compiled Law (MCL 380.1306), the school retains authority to search persons and property on school premises or at school functions:

- **Lockers & Desks:** Lockers and desks remain school property and may be inspected without notice under reasonable suspicion.
- **Person & Property:** Searches of a student's person, bag, or purse may occur if reasonable suspicion exists regarding prohibited or illegal items.
- **Motor Vehicles:** Motor vehicles parked on school property may be searched under reasonable suspicion.
- **Illegal Items:** Illegal or dangerous items will be confiscated and turned over to law enforcement.
- **Police Questioning:** Police questioning requires parental notification efforts unless an immediate safety threat exists. Administrators will witness questioning if parents cannot attend.

3.6 Stakeholder Responsibilities

- **Student Responsibilities:** Respect self and others, study diligently, adhere to rules, attend regularly, dress modestly, and protect school property.
- **Parent Responsibilities:** Support school policies, ensure regular/punctual attendance, foster independence, and maintain open communication with staff.
- **Teacher Responsibilities:** Enforce rules consistently and fairly, respect student individuality, and notify parents of academic/behavioral risks.
- **Administrative Staff Responsibilities:** Maintain a safe, understanding school climate, enforce policies consistently, and encourage innovative educational practices.
- **Board of Directors Responsibilities:** Adopt clear policies, hold administration accountable for fair enforcement, and foster strong community communication.

4. Attendance Policy (Updated August 2026)

Regular attendance is vital for academic and artistic growth. Student absences fall into three distinct categories:

- **Excused Absence:** Documented doctor visit, documented bereavement, or documented court appearance.
- **Verified Absence:** Parent/guardian notifies the attendance office with a valid reason (illness without doctor's note, vacation, college visit, appointment). Avoids discipline for skipping.
- **Unverified Absence:** Student fails to attend school/class without attendance office notification. Subject to disciplinary action for skipping.

> **Attendance Requirement for Events & Early Pick-Up Policy**
> • Event Participation: Students must attend at least half of the school day (4 class periods) to participate in or attend co-curricular events (e.g., prom, performances).
> • Early Pick-Up Restriction: To ensure safety and reduce traffic, students will NOT be dismissed early between 2:30 p.m. and 3:32 p.m. without advance written notice and documentation.
> • Assembly Days: The main office closes at 2:30 p.m. on assembly days so staff can monitor events.

4.1 Attendance Intervention Plan

Students are allowed up to 5 absences per semester. Missing 20 days of instruction in any class may result in No Credit (F). The following intervention steps apply:

- **After 5 Absences:** Parents receive formal communication from the Attendance Team.
- **After 10 Absences:** A mandatory meeting is scheduled with parents, student, and Attendance Team to establish an attendance plan.
- **After 15 Absences:** Formal warning communication issued regarding plan non-compliance and risk of course failure.
- **After 20 Absences:** Student receives No Credit (NC) for the class, subject to Attendance Team appeal.

4.2 Student Tardiness & Truancy

Students arriving late must report to the school office. Tardies are unexcused unless accompanied by a written pass from a permanent staff member (substitute passes are not valid).

- At 5th unexcused absence/tardy, teacher notifies parent/guardian.
- At 9th unexcused absence/tardy, student is referred to administration for credit loss warning.
- Under Compulsory Education law, truancy is filed if a student has >5 consecutive unverified absences, >10 excused absences in 30 days, or 30+ total absences in a school year.

5. Dress Code Policy (Updated August 2026)

Students are in school to learn. Any fashion (dress, accessory, hairstyle) that disrupts the educational process or presents a safety risk is prohibited. Personal grooming must be completed prior to entering classrooms.

5.1 Prohibited Attire Checklist

- Midriffs or crop tops showing more than 2 inches of skin.
- Pants worn significantly below the hips.
- See-through or low-cut shirts without an undershirt beneath.
- Low-cut tank tops with very low necklines or armholes.
- Non-prescription sunglasses (medical doctor's note required).
- Slippers or house shoes.
- Coats worn indoors (discretion of teacher/administrator).
- Shorts or skirts that do not adequately cover private areas.
- Clothing with slogans or designs that are obscene, advertise minor-prohibited products, convey insult/harassment, or incite disruption.

6. Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures

The Board of Directors grants broad discretion to administrative and teaching staff in addressing student misconduct, with an emphasis on progressive discipline intended to modify behavior rather than act punitively.

6.1 Continuum of Disciplinary Actions

- Informal teacher-student conference, counseling, or peer mediation.
- Parent contact via phone, personal conference, or written notice.
- Temporary removal from classroom or designated detention (before/after school or lunch).
- Revocation of privileges, hall passes, or field trip eligibility.
- Behavior contracts, administrative probation, community service assignments.
- Out-of-school suspension or Board recommendation for expulsion.

6.2 Due Process and Appeal Procedures

All students have the right to due process. Prior to suspension, the student receives notice of charges, evidence explanation, and opportunity to respond.

- **Suspensions ≤ 5 Days:** For suspensions of 5 days or less, the decision of the Vice Principal / Dean of Students is final.
- **Suspensions ≤ 10 Days:** For suspensions of 10 days or less, the decision of the Principal is final following a written appeal requested within 2 days.
- **Expulsion Hearings:** Expulsion recommendations are reviewed by a 3-member Expulsion Review Committee before formal Board action and hearing.

7. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy (Safe & Drug-Free Schools)

In compliance with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, Arts Academy in the Woods prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products on school property or at school events.

- **Investigation Protocol:** Mandatory inquiries, immediate parent notification, and law enforcement referral at administrative discretion.

- **Sanctions:** Disciplinary sanctions up to out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and criminal referral.
- **Overdose Clearance:** In event of overdose, readmission requires a medical physician's written clearance attesting to student safety.

8. Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Access to school network resources, workstations, and the Internet is a privilege requiring signed Acceptable Use Agreements. Users must observe digital etiquette:

- Be polite and use appropriate language; swearing and vulgarity are strictly prohibited.
- Do not harass, insult, attack, or display offensive messages/pictures.
- Refrain from non-academic gaming or bandwidth waste during academic hours.
- Never disclose personal information (address, phone number, location) online.

9. Personal Electronics Policy (State Law Compliance)

In compliance with Michigan State Law, smartphones, cell phones, gaming systems, and personal communication devices must be turned off and out of sight from the start to the end of the school day (including hallways, restrooms, and lunch periods).

- **1st Offense:** Device confiscated and sent to main office; student picks up at end of day.
- **2nd Offense:** Device sent to main office; parent/guardian must pick up device in person.
- **3rd Offense+:** Parent pick-up required, accompanied by warning, detention, community service, or suspension.

10. Categories of Misconduct & Behavior Management Guide

The table below outlines staff roles and jurisdiction for managing student behavior, followed by the tiered consequence matrix:

Classroom Teacher	Administrator	Support Service Staff
• Inappropriate language • Unprepared for class • Talking out of turn • Refusal to work / missing work • Minor class disruption / horseplay • Cheating • Electronics (1st offense) * Note: 3 incidents in same class period result in administrative referral.	• Pattern of teacher concerns • Fighting / aggressive contact • Bullying / threats / harassment • Property destruction • Theft / weapons / slurs • Tobacco / drugs / alcohol • Skipping class / truancy	• Counseling & social work • Mental health & MTSS support • IEP / Accommodation / BIP • Hygiene / food / clothing needs • Home / transportation concerns • Self-harm / crisis consult

10.1 Consequence Matrix

Tier 1 Infractions (Warning, Detention, 1-2 Day Suspension)	Tier 2 Infractions (Warning, Detention, 3-4 Day Suspension)	Tier 3 Infractions (Warning, Detention, 5 Day Suspension*)
• Tardy sweep (following 1st detention) • Clothing violation (refusal to change) • Skipping classes (after 1st detention) • Minor disruption / horseplay	• Major / chronic disruption • Electronics violations (repeat) • Theft (with evidence) • Insubordination • Slurs of any kind • Leaving property without permission	• Violent / sexual physical contact • Bullying / harassment • Property destruction • Fighting / threats • Weapons / Discrimination • Tobacco / drugs / alcohol

11. Prohibited Items List

The following items are strictly banned from school grounds, vehicles, and school-sponsored events:

- **Weapons & Firearms:** Firearms, handguns, rifles, shotguns, BB guns, pellet guns, air guns, and knives.
- **Explosives:** Bombs, improvised explosive devices, fireworks, and explosive materials.
- **Controlled Substances:** Illegal drugs, unprescribed controlled substances, vapes, cartridges, vape pens, and paraphernalia.
- **Alcohol & Tobacco:** Alcoholic beverages, beer, wine, liquor, and distilled spirits.
- **Dangerous Objects:** Piercing needles, razor blades, and threatening or dangerous materials.
- **Bedding/Blankets:** Blankets of any size are prohibited in school facilities.
- **Electronics & Personal Devices:** Personal electronics, cell phones, smartphones, gaming devices, laser pointers, and unauthorized electronic items during school hours.

12. Non-Discrimination Policy and Administrative Review

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Arts Academy in the Woods does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment.

Reviews of this Code of Conduct are conducted periodically under the direction of the Lead Administrator, with recommendations submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.