

2011 • 2012

Student Handbook



COMMON GROUND
HIGH • SCHOOL

Staff Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, and Environmental Education Center

Melissa Spear	Executive Director
Betsy Sneath	Director of Business & Administration
Joel Tolman	Director of Development & Community Engagement
Lizanne Cox	Director of Common Ground High School
Rachel Gilroy	Environmental Leadership & Sustainability Coordinator
Rebecca Holcombe	Director of Community Programs
John Overchuck	Director of Information Technology
Joe Lesiak	Site Manager
Shannon Raider	Farm Manager & Director of Agricultural Programs
Tom Gaudio	Green Jobs Corps Manager

Faculty and Staff Common Ground High School

Lizanne Cox	Director
Amy Ruotolo	Assistant Director for Student Affairs/Special Education
Miriam Sheffield	Assistant to the Director
Amy Champagne	Assistant Director for Student Affairs/English
Marvin Bivens	Maintenance
Jennifer Burke	English/Teaching & Learning Support
Karen Climis	Math
Rhonda DeLoatch	Chef
Larry Dome	Math
David Edgeworth	Science
Monique Frasier	English
Edward Henrey	Science
Melvin Griffin	Custodian
Maureen Jackson	Math
Madeleine Janover	US History / Social Studies
Iris Jimenez	Educational Aide
Patricia Johnson	Science
Keith Johnston	Modern Language
Jane Kovel	Post-High School Placement Consultant
Keith Lambert	English/Teaching & Learning Support
Joseph Lesiak	Site Manager/Social Worker
Carla Lia	Coordinator of After-School Programs
Joan Malerba Foran	English
Melvin Morales	Instructional Aide
Inge Osborne	Nurse
Jessica Pressley	Art
Erin Price	Technology Integration Specialist
Jason Pryor	US History / Social Studies
Ana Rosa	Office Manager
Camille Seaberry	Coordinator of After-School Support Services
Jeremy Stone	US History / Social Studies
Thea Williams	Assistant Chef

Common Ground High School Handbook

Table of Contents

- I. About Common Ground HS
- II. Academic Program and Schedule
- III. Attendance
- IV. School Codes of Conduct
- V. School Organization and Leadership

Contact Information

Common Ground High School
358 Springside Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
(203) 389-0823
www.commongroundct.org
cghs@commongroundct.org

I. About Common Ground HS

Mission

Common Ground High School will graduate students with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to live healthy, powerful, and productive lives. We do so through authentic learning that develops:

- Academic excellence,
- Ecological literacy,
- Strong character, and
- Commitment to community.

Common Ground High School takes the urban environment as its organizing focus, using three sites as laboratories for learning: the urban farm that is the school's campus, the natural environment of the adjacent West Rock Ridge State Park, and the urban setting of New Haven, Connecticut. Close study of these places develops understanding of local and global issues. Through this study and core academic work, students experience a rigorous high school curriculum that prepares them for competitive colleges, meaningful careers, and purposeful lives.

POWER Theme

Common Ground celebrates academic achievement and character through a POWER theme. Powerful students demonstrate **Pride** in their school, **Ownership** of their actions, **Wonder** and intellectual curiosity, serious **Effort** in all classes, and **Respect** for peers and adults throughout the school community.

The faculty recognize students whose actions best exemplify each trait, with awards at bimonthly POWER assemblies.

Students remind themselves and each other to be powerful through the following creed:

- I am a POWERful learner. I recognize that my words and actions make a difference, so....
- Today I will be POSITIVE about my work, my school and myself
- Today I will OWN my actions, my thoughts and my future
- Today I will WANT to learn and be WILLING to ask questions
- Today I will EARN my way by doing EXCELLENT work
- Today I will have high REGARD for peers, adults and myself

Common Ground also recognize students demonstrating exemplary commitment to Environmental Leadership and Health and Wellness.



Public Charter Schools

Common Ground High School is a public charter school. We are separate from New Haven Public Schools and guided by the board of directors of the New Haven Ecology Project, a not-for-profit corporation. We operate with public funds provided by the State Board of Education. We also rely on private resources and the support, cooperation and encouragement of agencies and institutions who value our mission in the greater New Haven area.

Location

Common Ground High School is located at 358 Springside Avenue in the West Rock area of New Haven on 20 acres of Parks Department land, surrounded by one of Connecticut's largest state parks. We are just ½ mile northwest of Southern Connecticut State University, on the Connecticut Transit "B1-Brookside" bus line.

Transportation

- **Bus:** Students who live in New Haven are given bus passes to use CT transit in the city of New Haven. Each bus pass may only be used to and from school, and for school-related educational activities. A student may exchange his or her used bus card for a new one after 10 appropriate uses. Misuse of bus passes or inappropriate behavior on the bus or at bus stops will lead minimally to suspension of bus privileges and could lead to serious disciplinary consequences, including suspension.

- **Bicycle:** Students may ride bicycles to school if they wear helmets while riding on school property and keep the bicycle parked on the school bike rack during the entire school day.
- **Automobile:** Students may drive cars to school after receiving permission from the office, which requires documentation from parents and the DMV and completing an agreement to follow all school automotive rules.

Parent Involvement

All parents/guardians are encouraged to be involved in the school in any way they can: attending after-school parent events, meeting with teachers, helping with class projects, sharing family history or career advice, offering after-school activities, providing clerical help, supporting events, chaperoning field trips or dances, joining a site work day or participating on the Parent Leadership Team. Please contact Amy Champagne at 203-389-0823 extension 1206 if you would like to be more involved.

In accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student's legal guardian may have access to any part of a student's school records. The actual guardian is the only person who has a right to these records.

All parents/guardians will be included in a school phone tree for emergency contact or notification of special school events.

Parents and guardians should advise the school of any specific health concerns, including allergies and medications. This is an environmental high school and requires outdoor study and work as part of the educational program. **Students will be allowed to sit out of outdoor activities only with a note from a doctor.**

Parents are encouraged to make their student's advisor their primary contact for questions and concerns about the student.

II. Academic Program & Schedule

Common Ground is a small college preparatory high school, that helps students develop the skills and knowledge to succeed after graduation. We emphasize:

- Environmental Understanding
- College Preparation and Academic Challenge
- Extended Learning and Understanding
- Active, Authentic Learning

Because Common Ground is a small school - with just 165 students - every student is known well. Our highly qualified teachers challenge them individually and link them to the learning experiences they need. We are committed to educating the whole child, and including the development of students' thoughts, feelings, and values.

The school year is divided into three 12-week trimesters: Fall, Winter and Spring. Each trimester, students have a new schedule. Students take five courses each trimester; they should earn seven and 3/4 credits per year.

Graduation Requirements

Common Ground students must meet the following credit requirements (26 credits minimum) for graduation:

4 English
3 Math
3 Science
3 History/Social Studies (including .5 Civics)
2 Modern Language
1 Art
1 Physical Education
9 Elective Credits
26 credits Minimum

To advance to the next grade, students must have earned at least the following credits:

Sophomores	7
Juniors	14
Seniors	21

Students must also complete 15 hours of Community Service each year, based on a plan they develop during weekly guidance meetings to earn guidance credit and advance to the next grade. Students are responsible for taking advantage of service opportunities to complete the 15 hours.

During their senior year, candidates for graduation will participate in a senior seminar and complete a senior project in collaboration with school facilitators and adult mentors. Students must reach the Federal level (the third band out of four) on all four areas of the CAPT test. Students unable to meet the Federal testing goal in any of the four areas will have to demonstrate mastery through the portfolio measures on which teachers assess them throughout their four years in high school.

Please Note: Graduation credit requirements are incrementing to 27 credits as follows:

<u>Year of Graduation</u>	<u>Credits Required</u>
2012	26
2013	27

Daily Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-9:05	Period 1	Period 1	8:00-8:55 Period 1	Period 1	Period 1
9:10-10:15	Period 2	Period 2	9:00-9:55 Period 2	Period 2	Period 2
10:15-10:25	Snack	Snack	9:55-10:05 Snack	Snack	Snack
10:25-11:30	Period 3	Period 3	10:05-11:00 Period 3	Period 3	Period 3
11:30-12:00	Lunch	Lunch	11:05-12:00 Period 4	Lunch	Lunch
12:00-1:05	Period 4	Period 4	12:00-12:30 Lunch	Period 4	Period 4
1:10-1:55	Guidance	Tier	12:30-1:25 Period 5	Tier	Guidance
2:00-3:05	Period 5	Period 5	2:00-3:30 STAFF MTG	Period 5	Period 5

Each class meets approximately 65 minutes every day. Some classes are joined to form a team-taught interdisciplinary block class for focused study.

Grading

Students will be given a letter grade and written evaluation at the end of the trimester in every class. Midterm progress reports are issued halfway through each trimester. Criteria for grading in each class include:

- Attainment of targeted skills / concepts
- Assessments for learning, including unit pre/post assessments
- Projects
- Daily Work
- Attendance
- Participation
- Homework

Students who do satisfactory work in each area for every class will receive:

- 1/2 credit per trimester for each single period class,
- 1 full credit for a combined two period block class
- 1/4 credit per year for guidance class
- 1/4 credit per year for Academic Support Tiering

Students are rewarded for academic achievement in multiple ways.

- High Honors = All A's in a trimester.
- Honors = All A's and B's in a trimester.
- GPA Societies
 - Bronze = Cumulative GPA 3-3.39
 - Silver = Cumulative GPA 3.40-3.69
 - Gold = Cumulative GPA 3.70+
- POWER Up Awards - for Outstanding Improvement in GPA

Academic Integrity

In preparing for the future, which includes higher education, a profession, or service to an increasingly global community, students must practice being responsible citizens. This means that they will be required to follow a code of ethics; these are the standards of behavior one will be expected to maintain both on the job and—more and more frequently—in one’s personal life. At Common Ground High School, students will practice the type of honesty and integrity they must demonstrate later in their professional lives.

This makes the issue of academic honesty the core of any student project. To that end, students will receive instruction to produce work that is not plagiarized; after this instruction, they will be required to credit each source they use in the production of their projects or be charged with academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty occurs when a student misrepresents his or her connection to the ideas or materials of a project. Academic dishonesty includes the presentation of the words or ideas from another source as one’s own words, without proper acknowledgement. It also includes any “heavy-handed” assistance in the creation of work submitted for academic evaluation. When the balance of student work is overshadowed by unrecognized contributions from other sources, it will be regarded as intentional: the evasion, substitution, or misrepresentation by the student as to whom the credit belongs. Any form of academic misconduct or dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action.

Guidance

All students participate in a rigorous guidance program during their high school tenure. Upon entering as freshmen, students are assigned a faculty advisor who serves as their guidance teacher and advocate, and meet in guidance groups twice a week for group building, goal setting, and college and career planning.

Important note: Students must complete fifteen hours of community service a year to receive guidance credit, and students must pass guidance to advance to the next grade.

Guidance Curriculum

Freshman Year: Emphasizes establishing connection to peers, self, and academics using a decision-making curriculum; health and wellness education; and other personal, career and college exploration activities. Service to the community is explored through on-site stewardship projects and service off-site. 15 hours of community service required.

Sophomore Year: Emphasizes self exploration (examining individual strengths and weaknesses) in relation to career areas of interest. Sophomores complete the year with an understanding of three to four career areas of interest and related education and experience requirements. Service to the community is explored through on-site stewardship projects and service off-site. 15 hours of community service required.

Junior Year: Students are assigned on-line SAT prep accounts. All juniors complete two to three off-site job shadows in careers fields of interest and take a Junior College and Career Experience class. Service to the community is explored through on-site stewardship projects and service off-site. 15 hours of community service required.

Senior Year: Emphasizes finalizing post-high school plans. Seniors will get one-on-one support with the college application process (including financial aid and scholarships), career training, programs applications, and other post-high school opportunities. Seniors will also participate in a required Senior Seminar course. 15 hours of community service required; many of the hours will be fulfilled during Senior Seminar. Senior Seminar requires that students complete and present a rigorous group Social Justice Project.

Guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate regularly with their student's guidance teacher.

After School Programs

Common Ground offers many after school programs for enrolled students through its **After School Learning Center**, which offers a safe space for students to participate in academic enrichment programs, music and arts programming, and other recreational and cultural opportunities.

The **After School Learning Center** operates from 3:05-5:00, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays, and 1:30-3:30 on Wednesdays.

All school rules apply after school. Students must be in supervised programs by 3:10 pm. Snack is provided at 4:00.

Programs end at 5:00 pm and students are expected to depart school grounds promptly at 5:00 pm.

Failure to obey after school rules will result in a disciplinary consequence, which may involve removal of after school privileges.

After School Academic Support

Common Ground offers a wide variety of after school support services for students. All after school academic services are mandatory for students who are referred by school staff or parents. Students may also volunteer to receive additional support services.

For more information or to refer a student please contact: Camille Seaberry, 203-389-0823 x1205

Academic Laboratories:

Academic Labs provide students with targeted support in Math and Reading. Students placed in Academic Labs may be required to attend up to four sessions per week. Because Academic Labs are part of a student's individual learning plan, students who miss a day of Academic Labs for any reason must make up the session on a different day of the same week or Saturday.

Criteria for placing students in Academic Labs include:

- Scoring below the proficient level on any 8th grade CMT test
- Scoring below grade level on freshmen math and reading placement tests
- Referral by Common Ground staff and/or a parent/guardian

Tutoring:

Local college students and professionals volunteer their time to provide additional support to Common Ground students in Math, Reading, Science, Foreign Language, and other academic areas as needed.

Mentoring:

Common Ground offers a Mentoring Support program in collaboration with the University of New Haven (UNH). Common Ground students meet with UNH mentors for a two-hour session once a week, during which they receive one hour of academic support and co-participate in a recreational or social activity. At the end of the program, Common Ground students shadow their mentor at UNH for a day, sitting in on classes, having lunch, and participating in an on-campus activity.

Homework Center:

Homework Center is a quiet space for students to complete homework assignments and other course work. Teachers and other trained staff provide direct support as needed. Students can be referred to the homework center by teachers to make up missing work.

Other Support:

Teachers provide direct support sessions to students through scheduled support sessions or during after school office hours.

Environmental Honors

The Environmental Honors Program recognizes students with serious interest in the environment, strong grades, and a growing base of leadership skills, experience and understanding. Benefits of the program for students include scholarships, academic recognition on transcripts, authentic independent learning, support in finding internship experience, and connections to higher education.

Students may apply to enter the program once they meet the academic requirements. Once accepted, students work with the Environmental Honors Program Coordinator to envision and plan a major Environmental Leadership Project. Each project will be different, but all must include a substantial amount of research, active engagement with the community environment, written reflection & publication, and effective oral presentation. Most of the responsibility for completing an Honors Project falls on the individual student, but all Honors students are coached throughout by the Environmental Honors Program Coordinator, an Environmental Honors Advisor, additional teachers and staff, and community mentors when appropriate. Honors students may be offered an independent study period for one trimester to focus on their Honors Project. In addition, Environmental Honors students are expected to participate in

Extracurricular Environmental Leadership experiences above and beyond the school day. On-going participation in after-school programs, clubs, and service is monitored by the Environmental Honors Program Coordinator, and substantial engagement is required to complete the program.

Academic Requirements:

- “B” average or above in multiple Environmental Courses
- Career GPA of 3.0 or above

Honors Program:

- Envision, plan, and complete a major Environmental Leadership Project
- Meet regularly with Program Coordinator, and advisor, staff, and mentor as appropriate
- Present Environmental Leadership Project to multiple audiences
- Participate in Extracurricular Environmental Leadership experiences
- Research and initiate an Environmental Internship in the community
- Participate in Honors Program activities, functions, and events

Post-Project Honors Students:

- Maintain Academic Requirements
- Complete Environmental Internship, as necessary
- Continue Extracurricular Environmental Leadership experiences
- Develop Honors Program through recruitment and coaching

Environmental Courses:

AP Environmental Science
Biodiversity
Documenting New Haven
Ecologia/Harvest
Environmental History
Environmental Justice
Environmental Research
Environmental Science
Environmental Ventures
Food & Environment
Green Architecture
POWER
Sustainable Design

Extracurricular:

Community Service Club
Environ. Leadership Club
Envirothon
Environmental Ventures
Green Jobs Corps
Student Ambassadors
Student Government
Community-based
Environmental
Organizations

III. Attendance

Common Ground’s goal is for 95% of its students to be in school on time 95% of the time.

Absences

1. In order for an absence to be excused, parents/guardians should notify the school office (389-0823) any time a child is absent and send a note to the school the following day regarding required appointments, illness, etc. **Appropriate documentation must accompany absences of 2 days or greater.**
2. Up to two days will be excused for a funeral or bereavement. Additional days for travel will be unexcused.
3. Failure to notify the school regarding an absence renders that absence **UNEXCUSED.**
4. Calls will be made and documented by office staff for all unexcused absences.
5. After two unexcused absences, a letter will be mailed home, requiring that the parent come in to develop an attendance plan.

6. Home visits will be made to all parents who fail to keep required appointments
7. Failure to keep two scheduled appointments will result in referral to the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters and to the Juvenile Affairs department of the New Haven Police Department.
8. Four unexcused absences in one month and/or ten unexcused absences in one year mandates school reporting to the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.

NOTE: School administrators make final decisions about excusing absences. Required appointments should be scheduled outside school hours so that students do not miss classes. Known medical problems should be noted on the Medical Information form, which is kept on record at the school.

Tardies—Morning

1. Parents/guardians should notify the school office (389-0823) any time a child will be tardy
2. Failure to notify the school regarding a tardy renders that tardy UNEXCUSED.
3. Unexcused tardy before 8:20
 - a. Student's tardy will be logged.
 - b. Student will be sent directly to class.
 - c. Classroom policies for lateness will be enforced by individual teachers.
 - d. Chronic tardiness (4 or more tardies) will result in a letter home and a request for a mandatory parent meeting.
 - e. Home visits will be made to all parents who fail to keep required appointments.
 - f. Failure to keep two or more scheduled appointments will result in referral to the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.
4. Unexcused tardy after 8:20, before 9:00A.M.
 - a. Student's tardy will be logged
 - b. Parent will be notified that the student is tardy
 - c. Student must complete mandatory late room assignment in the late room
 - d. Students must attend after school detention to make up missing 1st period work
 - e. Home visits will be made to all parents who fail to keep required appointments
 - f. Failure to keep two or more scheduled appointments will result in referral to the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.
5. Unexcused tardy after 9:00 A.M.
 - a. Parent will be called—parent meeting is required
 - b. Student will be kept in school office until parent arrives
 - c. Home visits will be made to all parents who fail to keep required appointments
 - d. Failure to keep two or more scheduled appointments will result in referral to the Juvenile Court.

Tardies—During day

Students are expected to be in their seats ready to work when the tardy bell rings. Students who are not in their seats are marked tardy with consequences assigned by the classroom teacher.

Early Dismissal

Any time it is necessary for a student to be dismissed from school before the regular dismissal time, the parent will be notified. If a parent/guardian requests an early dismissal, s/he must notify the school. If the parent/guardian wants someone else to pick up his/her child, it must be a responsible adult designated by the parent or guardian. Office staff must receive parental approval before permitting any student to leave school early, and students must sign out in the office. Early dismissal passes will be issued to students who give advanced notification of the early dismissal to the office. These passes should be shared with teachers. Students who leave school without securing parental approval and signing out are considered to be skipping school.

Emergency Closings

On rare occasions schools may have to be opened late, dismissed early or cancelled for bad weather. In the event of such an emergency, Common Ground notifies the media of delays and closings. These closings are announced on TV stations News Channel 8 and NBC 30. Common Ground follows the decisions of the New Haven Board of Education (unless site-specific issues require additional closing).

Please notify the school if home, work or cell phone numbers change so that parents or guardians can be reached in case of emergency.

CREDIT

Students who are absent more than four times in a trimester are in danger of losing credit in a class. Students will be allowed to make up class time for excused absences. Students must make up time for excused absences incurred before mid-term by mid-term. Excused absences incurred after mid-term must be made up by the end of the term.

**STUDENTS WHO HAVE MORE THAN SEVEN ABSENCES
IN A CLASS WILL LOSE CREDIT.**

IV. School Codes of Conduct

Student Bill of Rights

All students have the right to:

- Learn without being disturbed.
- Be in school without being afraid.
- Ask questions, keeping in mind a respectful manner and an appropriate tone.
- Resolve differences with fellow students and with teachers in an appropriate way.
- Know what is expected of them.
- Know how they are being evaluated.
- Expect authorities to protect these rights.

The Bottom Line is Respect

Students who respect themselves show respect to other students, teachers and the school as a whole.

Dress Code

The dress code exists to encourage students to concentrate on academics. It reflects standards of acceptable dress in schools and the workplace. Students may not wear hats, hoods, durags, bandannas or headbands in the school building at any time. If these items are worn in the hallway or brought into classrooms, they will be confiscated and may require parent retrieval. Fashion scarves are allowed.

Students who wear clothing that is too revealing or that features inappropriate messages will be provided a change of clothing. Students who fail to wear the alternate clothing will be placed in In-School Suspension until the parents come in. Inappropriate messages include references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, or hate speech that demeans people of a certain race, religion, culture or sexual orientation. Students must wear regular shirts and shoes (e.g. no tank tops, no pajamas or slippers). **Common Ground faculty and staff make the final decision regarding what is appropriate to wear at school. Students who miss class time due to dress code offenses are required to make up time on Saturdays.**

Because a number of CGHS classes include outdoor study, students are responsible for bringing clothes that they can wear to work outside. Students should bring an old shirt, pants and footwear so that their regular clothes will not get ruined.

Electronic Devices

Students are able to achieve more in school if they are not distracted. If cell phones, video devices, music players, and other electronic devices are seen or heard in school, they will be taken away and will require parent retrieval for repeated offenses. Music players may be used before 7:55 am and during lunch in the cafeteria and outside by the picnic tables. Electronic devices are never permitted in hallways, classrooms, or directly in front of the school building. Refusal to turn in any prohibited item is considered insubordination.

Food and Drink

The cafeteria is the only place where food is allowed except during official class activities that involve food. Students may not bring food into the hallways and classrooms or outside. Teachers establish classroom rules about students' beverages in class. Students may not order food to be delivered to the school. Chilled water is available in the cafeteria for students who bring a reusable water bottle.

Acceptable Internet Use

Students and staff must understand and practice proper and ethical use of the Internet. All students and staff must attend at least one session regarding procedures, ethics and security

involving using Internet. This training is required before receiving an account name and password in order to use the system.

1. Acceptable Use

- a. The purpose of the Internet is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to unique resources and an opportunity for collaborative work. To remain eligible as a user, the use of your account must be in support of and consistent with the education objectives of Common Ground High School. Access to the Internet is made possible through an appropriate provider to be designated by Common Ground High School at its sole discretion. Common Ground High School and all users of the Internet must comply with existing rules and Acceptable Use Policies, which are incorporated into this document and are available from Common Ground.
- b. Transmission of any material in violation of any United States or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighting material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.
- c. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

2. Privilege

The use of the Common Ground High School Network is a privilege, not a right.

Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions and rules, may result in cancellation of the privilege. Common Ground High School, under this agreement, delegates authority to the administrator or his/her designee to determine appropriate use and may deny, revoke, suspend or close any user account at any time based upon its determination of inappropriate use by account holder or user.

3. Monitoring

The Board of Directors and Common Ground High School shall respect the privacy of user accounts but reserves the right to review any material on user accounts and to monitor fileserver space when it is deemed appropriate or necessary.

4. No Warranties

The Board of Directors and Common Ground High School make no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Board of Directors and Common Ground High School will not be responsible for any damages a user suffers. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, no deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the Board of Directors or Common Ground High School's negligence or by the user's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the

Internet is at the user's own risk. The Board of Directors and Common Ground High School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. All users need to consider the source of any information they obtain, and consider how valid the information may be.

5. Responsibilities and Prohibitions

With the rights of membership in the Common Ground High School Network community come certain responsibilities and prohibitions. Adherence to the following is required:

1. Never share passwords or accounts. Users have full responsibility for the use of their account. All violations of this policy that can be traced to an individual account name will be treated as the sole responsibility of the owner of the account.
2. Never use the Network for any activities that are considered illegal pursuant to state or federal law. Illegal activities may include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:
 - a. Tampering with computer hardware or software, unauthorized entry into computers, or vandalism or destruction of computer files.
 - b. Fraudulent copying, communications or modification of original, authored materials.
 - c. Using the network to harass or disparage others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or religious or political beliefs.
 - d. Violations of copyright rules regarding software, information, and attributions of authorship. For this reason, commercial software may not be installed on the system without express permission of the system administrator.
 - e. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance of the Network or any other computer system or network on the Internet. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, the development of programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer system, and use of the network to intentionally obtain or modify files, passwords or data belonging to other users.
 - f. Hate mail, threats, harassment, and other similar communication via the Network.
3. The Network will not be used to transmit or obtain obscene or pornographic material. There is to be no display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons, or any transmission or use of E-mail communications that contain ethnic slurs or racial epithets.
4. Loading or use of unauthorized games, software and/or programs is prohibited.

5. Do not post communications to a public forum without the prior consent of the author of the communication. However, messages posted in a public forum such as newsgroups may be copied in subsequent communications, so long as proper attribution is given.
6. Use appropriate language. Profanity or obscenity will not be tolerated on the network. All network users should use language appropriate to school situations as indicated by district and school codes of conduct.
7. Avoid offensive or inflammatory speech. Network users must respect the rights of others both in the local community and in the Internet at large. Personal attacks are an unacceptable use of the Network.
8. Do not assume a false name or communicate on the Network using another person's name or password.
9. Behave in an exemplary manner on "virtual" field trips. When "visiting" locations on the Internet, or using video conferencing or screen sharing communications tools, network users must conduct themselves as representatives of both their school and the community.
10. Use of the Network for non-school purposes is prohibited.
11. Do not reveal personal information about yourself or others, including home address, telephone numbers, social security number or credit card number.
12. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities and may result in the loss of user privileges.
13. Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
14. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.
15. Social networking tools, chat, and instant messaging services should be used for school purposes only.

6. Vandalism, Harassment, and Cyber-bullying

- (a) Vandalism and harassment may result in cancellation of user privileges and/or disciplinary action, including recommendation for expulsion.
- (b) Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, and destroy data of another user, Internet, or other networks that are connected to the Internet backbone. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.
- (c) Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user, or the interference of another user's work. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the sending of unwanted mail.
- (d) Cyber-bullying is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted on a person or group of people through electronic media such as e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, mobile phones, pagers and defamatory Web sites. Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing.

7. Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority because there are so many users. If any Common Ground High School Network user identifies a security problem, he/she must notify an administrator or teacher at once. The user must not use another individual's Common Ground High School Network account. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the Common Ground High School Network.

8. Consequences

Failure to abide by the provisions of this policy may result in the loss of privileges to use the Network. Violations of this policy by students may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. In the case of employees, violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Illegal use of the Network, including intentional deletion or damage to files or data belonging to others, copyright violations, or theft of services will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

A Common Ground High School Network user shall be held responsible for damages to equipment, a systems, or software resulting from intentional or willful acts.

The Director of Schools or his/her designee is authorized to establish guidelines for filtering, and blocking of, access to Internet sites in a manner that will not unreasonably interfere with student and staff acquisition of information appropriate to attaining the educational goals and objectives of Common Ground High School.

9. **Guidelines for Student Use**

Students who wish to use electronic services and networks that are available to them may do so provided that they:

1. Read and agree to the Acceptable Use Policy.
2. Sign the Internet Use Agreement contract.
3. Students 18 and over may sign their own forms. Have parent/guardian sign the contract (if under 18).
4. Submit the completed contract to the administrator.

Computers: Web Sites/Pages

The Board of Directors allows Common Ground High School to create and maintain world wide web sites for educational purposes. Web sites are avenues for educating, providing information, communicating and expressing creativity. District and individual school web sites shall be used to share information about school curriculum and instruction, school-authorized activities, and other information relating to our schools and our mission. Web sites shall also provide instructional resources for staff and students.

Materials displayed on web sites are published on the Internet. Therefore, the content should be professional quality and consistent with the education mission of the school system. Web sites shall follow standards for ethical behavior in regard to information and technology by showing respect for the principles of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights and the responsible use of information and technology. Pages shall reflect an understanding that both internal and external audiences will be viewing the information.

Any pages or links representing the school district shall follow guidelines and responsibilities pertaining to content standards, student records, copyright, and technical standards which are contained in the administrative regulations which accompany this policy.

Use of Computer Equipment and Related Systems, Software, and Networks by Students and Staff

Common Ground High School provides computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks for students and staff to carry out the mission of Common Ground in an environment which ensures access to up-to-date information, management, and communication services. Responsible use of these systems and networks is expected of all students and staff.

The computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks are the property of Common Ground High School and are to be used only for those activities directly related to teaching, learning, and/or management by students and staff. The equipment, infrastructure, and software are not to be used for personal gain by any student or staff member.

The computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks provided by Common Ground High School shall not be modified or altered by individual users without the authorization of the Director of Schools or his/her designee.

All users are hereby made aware that all information on Common Ground High School's computers, computer systems, and networks are in the public domain, unless specifically protected by the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.

Common Ground High School reserves the right to bypass any or all individual or group passwords to determine the activity on any or all computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks.

Use of the computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks will be restricted to those users who have signed the Common Ground High School Acceptable Use Policy. In the case of minors, the Common Ground High School Acceptable Use Policy must also be signed by the minor's parent or guardian.

The Director of Common Ground High School is directed to establish guidelines and procedures for responsible use of computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks provided by Common Ground High School.

Acceptable School Behavior

Common Ground students should respect the people around them whenever they are on school grounds or in a school activity that is off school grounds. They must:

- Walk
- Keep their hands to themselves (roughhousing and public displays of affection are not appropriate)
- Use a quiet voice
- Leave all playing cards and dice at home
- Refrain from betting
- Refrain from throwing **anything**
- Use appropriate language (swearing, racist, sexist, sexually explicit, threatening, insulting or discriminatory language is not tolerated)

Insubordination

In order to ensure a positive and productive learning environment, students must follow teacher and staff directives. Students will incur serious discipline consequences up to and including suspension if they refuse to follow a direction from a staff member.

Illegal activity

We are committed to running a safe school and are proud of our students' dedication to good citizenship. Any illegal activity on school grounds or during school activities will result in immediate action, up to and including police referral and expulsion. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons (includes anything with a blade) or fake drugs or weapons
 - Physical assault
 - Theft of or damage to school property (student must also pay to repair or replace items)
- Possession of drugs or weapons results in mandatory police referral and expulsion.

Trespassing

Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit the school. Please sign in at the office. Parents/guardians who wish to speak to faculty members, the administrative staff or the school director may call to make an appointment or ask for a return call. Any person on the Common Ground High School property who is not conducting such official business with the school may be asked to leave.

Bullying, Hazing and Harassment

Common Ground is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, where all school community members treat each other with respect and appreciate the rich diversity in our school. Any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or hate crimes in our school or school-related activities will not be tolerated. Common Ground will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, and take prompt, effective action to end that behavior and prevent its reoccurrence. Action will include, where appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency.

Bullying

All students deserve to feel safe, respected and free from bullying and intimidation. Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting will be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school. This includes electronic or cyber-bullying.

Bullying can include physical attacks, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation, extortion or stealing of money or possessions, and/or exclusion from a peer group.

Students should report acts of bullying directly to the Director of the school or his/her designee. Such complaints can be made in person or anonymously. School staff should make written reports of bullying acts that they witness and/or receive from students directly to the School Director. Parents/guardians can direct written reports of suspected bullying to the school director.

Students who engage in any act of bullying while at school, at any school function, or in conjunction with any school-sponsored event are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

Bullying complaints can be referred to the school's Title IX Coordinator for a formal Title IX investigation.

Hazing

Hazing activities seriously disrupt the educational process and are not condoned at Common Ground High School. Hazing is defined as an act or acts taken by a student or group of students that result in a physical or emotional harm to a person in order for that person to be allowed into a student group. Because hazing involves violence or threats of violence, students who engage in any act of hazing at school or at any school function will incur serious discipline consequences, and referral to law enforcement officials. Hazing complaints can be referred to the school's Title IX Coordinator for a formal Title IX investigation.

Harassment

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical conduct on school property or at a school-related activity relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected statuses), that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities, or to interfere with or limit an individual's employment, by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational or work environment. Harassment shall also mean conduct, if it persists, that will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational or work environment. A single incident, depending on its severity, may create a hostile environment.

Harassment based on a person's protected status may include, but is not limited to:

- Degrading, demeaning, insulting, or abusive verbal or written statements;
- Taking personal belongings, taunting, teasing, name-calling, or spreading rumors;
- Drawing or writing graffiti, slogans, visual displays (such as swastikas), or symbols on school or another person's property (e.g., books or backpacks);
- Telling degrading or offensive jokes;
- Unwanted physical contact of any kind;
- Physical violence, threats of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or stalking;
- Threatening letters, emails, instant messages, or websites;
- Defacing, damaging, or destroying school (e.g., desks, lockers or school walls) or another person's property; throwing objects (eggs, paint).

Examples of Specific Types of Harassment (depending upon the circumstances):

Disability Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her disability or perceived disability, including damaging or interfering with use of necessary equipment, imitating manner of movement, using slurs like “retard,” or invading personal space to intimidate.

National Origin Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her national origin, ancestry, or ethnic background, such as negative comments about surnames, customs, language, accents, immigration status, or manner of speaking.

Racial Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her race or color, including characteristics of a person’s race or color, such as racial slurs or insults, racial graffiti or symbols, hostile acts based on race, nicknames based on racial stereotypes, negative comments about appearance, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

Religious Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her religion, including derogatory comments about religious beliefs, traditions, practices (includes non-belief), or religious clothing.

Sexual Orientation Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at a person based on his/her actual or perceived sexual orientation, such as anti-gay slurs or insults, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is illegal under both federal and state laws. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, her/his academic status or progress;
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual; or
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

Depending on the circumstances, sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- **Verbal forms of sexual harassment**, including repeated unwanted requests for dates, sexual rumors, sexually explicit jokes, howling, whistles, catcalls, making unwanted gender-based

references to a person's physical characteristics;

- **Written forms of sexual harassment**, including obscene graffiti, sexually graphic computer messages or games, love poems or letters continuing after being informed they are unwelcome;
- **Nonverbal forms of sexual harassment**, including offensive gestures, following or stalking another, cornering or blocking a person, leering, pressuring for sexual activities;
- **Visual forms of sexual harassment**, including displaying sexually suggestive or sexually provocative photographs, pictures, objects, cartoons, or posters; or
- **Unwelcome physical touching**, including grabbing, groping, squeezing, sexual fondling, kissing, brushing against another's body, body hugs, and other unwelcome contact.

Reporting/Grievance Procedure for Bullying, Hazing and Harassment

Any student, who believes s/he has been the victim of bullying, hazing, or harassment of any sort by a student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of Common Ground High School, or by any other person who is participating in, observing, or otherwise engaged in activities under the auspices of Common Ground, is encouraged to immediately report the alleged acts to the School Director (or the Director's designee).

Any teacher, administrator, or other school official, who has been or receives notice that a student or school employee has been the victim of bullying, hazing, or harassment of any sort by a student, teacher, administrator or other Common Ground High School personnel, or by any other person who is participating in, observing, or otherwise engaged in activities under the auspices of Common Ground, is required to immediately report the alleged acts to the School Director (or the Director's designee).

The reporting party is encouraged to use the school report form; however, oral reports shall be considered complaints, as well. If the report is given verbally, a designated official shall complete the school's report form based on the oral information.

The school director, upon receipt of a complaint alleging bullying (includes cyber-bullying), hazing, or harassment of any form, shall determine whether to resolve said complaints through formal or informal procedures, and will immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. Informal proceedings will be conducted by officials designated by the school Director. All complaints requiring formal procedures shall be immediately forwarded to the school's Title IX officer, who will conduct a formal investigation. All complaints involving school administrators should be made directly to the Title IX officer.

The School Board hereby designates Betsy Sneath as the School's Title IX Coordinator. Ms. Sneath's contact information:

Betsy Sneath
Title IX Coordinator
Common Ground High School
358 Springside Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515

(203) 389-0823 ext. 1211

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator. In addition, the School may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged harassment.

The investigation will be completed within 14 days.

The investigating official shall make a written report to the Director upon completion of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

Upon receipt of a report, the School will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to: warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge.

The school shall report in writing the results of all formal investigations filed under these procedures to the complainant and other parties in accordance with state and federal laws regarding data or records privacy, and consistent with the privacy rights of the alleged harasser.

If the results of the School's evaluation of a complaint of harassment results in a conclusion that an individual has engaged in unlawful harassment in violation of this policy, or that school personnel have failed to report harassment as required herein, that individual may appeal this determination by use of established School Board procedures for appealing other adverse personnel and/or education related actions. If the results of the School's evaluation of a complaint of harassment results in a conclusion that no unlawful harassment has occurred, an individual who was allegedly subjected to harassment and believes that this conclusion is erroneous may appeal this determination by use of established School Board procedures for appealing other adverse personnel and/or education related actions. Submission of a good faith report of harassment will not affect the reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.

Common Ground will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the School's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform to any discovery or disclosure obligations.

Common Ground will take appropriate steps to protect from retaliation persons who take action consistent with this Policy, or who report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of this Policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action.

Conduct outside of the school building

All school rules apply to students on the school grounds, on the bus to and from school, and on school field trips. The school grounds extend from behind the school to the Job Corps property.

Discipline

Common Ground High School adheres to a progressive discipline policy. **Students who continue to break rules will meet increasingly serious consequences.** The following offenses are **examples** of actions that would meet with each consequence. The school will enforce consequences for **any** behavior that does not promote a safe or positive learning environment.

Progressive Discipline Violations of School Policy

Level 1

Minimum lunch detention

Breaking a classroom rule
Inappropriate hallway behavior
Disrupting other classes
Two tardies in the same course

Level 2

Minimum after-school detention

Earning three lunch detentions
Skipping a class or part of a class
Failing to have an appropriate hall pass
Skipping a lunch detention
Coming to school more than 20 minutes late

Level 3

Minimum Saturday detention

Multiple after-school detentions
Missing a detention
Skipping classes or school
Insubordination

Level 4

Minimum in-school suspension (days determined by offense)

Insubordination
Fighting
Encouraging other students to fight (instigating)
Vandalism or theft

Possession or use of tobacco on school grounds
Other aggressive or dangerous behavior

Level 5

Out of School Suspension

Repeat In-School suspensions
Continued bullying or harassment
Threatening a teacher, staff member, or student

Level 6

Recommendation for expulsion

Continued violations of school rules after Level 4 violations
Possession of a weapon or drugs, including fake weapons or drugs

Note: All illegal activity will be reported to Law Enforcement Officials.

V. School Organization and Leadership

Common Ground High School is directed by the school faculty under the oversight of the School Director. The faculty determines how the school meets state requirements to educate students and to fulfill the school's mission. The teachers plan the academic schedule, set specific procedures and are accountable for providing a quality education for each student through specific courses as well as whole school experiences. All full-time faculty also act as guidance teachers, helping students succeed, and serving as their advocates. A parent who has a question about a student's education should first consult that student's guidance teacher.

The following staff direct and support the faculty:

- The Director, Lizanne Cox, is responsible for leading and managing all affairs of the school and community programs.
- Assistant to the Director, Miriam Sheffield, and Assistant Directors for Student Affairs, Amy Champagne and Amy Ruotolo, assist the Director with the management of school climate matters, including student support, student leadership initiatives, and school programs and events.

Common Ground High School

2011-2012 Calendar

Labor Day - Sept. 5
 Rosh Hashanah - Sept. 29-30
 Columbus Day - Oct. 10
 Veteran's Day - Nov. 11
 Thanksgiving Recess - Nov. 24, 25
 Christmas Recess - Dec. 26-30
 New Year's Day-Jan. 2 Observed

Three King's Day - Jan. 6
 M.L. King's Birthday - Jan. 16
 February Recess - Feb. 20-24
 Good Friday-Apr. 6
 April Recess- Apr. 16-20
 Memorial Day - May 28

182 STUDENT DAYS 187 TEACHER DAYS

July					August					September				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
													1o	2o
										□	6	7	8	9
										12	13	14	15	16
										19	20	21	22	23
					(29)	(30)	31o		(1)	26	27	28	□	(19)
October					November					December				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
						1	2	3	4				1	2
3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	□	5	6	7	8	9
□	11	12	13	14m	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23f#	□	□	19	20	21	22	23#
24	25	26	27	28	(28)g	29	30			□	□	□	□	□
31				(20)					(18)					(17)
January					February					March				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
							1	2	3				1#	(2)g
□	3	4	5	□	6	7	8	9	10	5	6C	7C	8C	9
9	10	11	12	13m	13	14	15	16	17#	12	13C	14C	15C	16
□	17	18	19	20	□	□	□	□	□	19	20	21	22	23
23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29f			26	27	28	29	30
30	31			(19)					(16)					(21)
April					May					June				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	□		1	2	3	4					1
9	10	11	12	13#	7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8
□	□	□	□	□	14	15	16	17	18	11	12e	13e	14	15
23	24	25	26	27m	21	22	23	24	25	18	19G	20#f	(21)	
30					□	29	30	31						
				(15)					(22)					(14)

() = Teacher's Day Only
 f = End of Trimester

G = Graduation

Fall Trimester: Aug. 31-Nov. 23

Midterm Oct. 14th

T1 = 56 days

m = midterm report

C = CAPT Test Day

e = Final exams

Winter Trimester: Nov. 29-Feb. 29

Midterm Jan. 13th

T2 = 54 days

= Early Dismissal, 12:00(no lunch)

g = Staff Development Day

□ = No Classes

Spring Trimester: Mar. 1-June 20

Midterm April 27th

T3 = 72-6 CAPT = 66 days



COMMON GROUND
HIGH · SCHOOL

**358 Springside Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06515**

**Phone: 203.389.0823
Fax 203.389.7458**

Email: cghs@commongroundct.org

Web: www.commongroundct.org

Common Ground High School is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. Common Ground High School does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disability, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Common Ground High School does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding Common Ground High School's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Betsy Sneath
Director of Business and Administration
Common Ground - High School, Urban Farm and
Environmental Education Center
358 Springside Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
T 203-389-4333 x1211
F 203-389-5478
bsneath@commongroundct.org
www.commongroundct.org