



Welcome to
Thames River Academy

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Thames River Academy Statement of Purpose:

*“**The purpose** of Thames River Academy is to educate students in a supportive environment that provides personalized learning opportunities through a creative and holistic approach to learning. Programs are provided that encourage authentic learning, community involvement and respect for diversity. This foundation allows students to define their individual pathways to success.”*

Thames River Academy Mission Statement:

*“**The mission** of Thames River Academy is to educate the Whole Student through enhanced classroom instruction, increased academic achievement, the promotion of Character Development, Career Education, and active participation in community service. Staff will guide students toward civic responsibility in becoming literate informed participating members of the community and American society.”*

THE VISION OF THAMES RIVER ACADEMY:

*“Thames River Academy is committed to promoting a change in school culture and **envisions** a school that provides a safe learning environment where individual differences are accepted, all persons entering the campus exhibit respect and civility toward each other, high academic achievement is promoted and pursued, and students have become stakeholders in the educational process.”*

In 1905, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, a civil rights activist and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, wrote, **“Common school education should be free to all American children and compulsory. High school training should be adequately provided for all, and college training should be the monopoly of no class or race in any section of our common country.”** *

And, in 1897 the famous educator John Dewey stated, **“I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.”** *

John Dewey believed that education is necessary for the development and growth of our youth. The knowledge gained should be of benefit in the lives of the youth of the community as they gain the tools needed to develop mature, responsible character traits. In conjunction with John Dewey’s

· Platform and goals of the “Niagara Movement,” 1905.

* “My Pedagogic Creed,” 1897.

philosophy, Dr. Du Bois believed that the only means of maintaining a free and equal democratic society is through education. Thames River Academy salutes these educators and reformers, and their visions.

MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Students at Thames River Academy come from varied backgrounds with different experiences, different perceptions of life, and often times different cultures and ethnic heritage. The Thames River Academy staff and administration expects a degree of respect and cooperation between **ALL** students: Thames River Academy staff and administration have **ZERO TOLERANCE** for racism, sexism, bigotry, prejudice, or discrimination of any kind. Students at Thames River Academy may wear different clothes than the norm, color their hair bright vivid hues, engage in piercing, braid their hair, or wear dreads; students may not ridicule, criticize, or engage in the willful persecution of any student because of their differences. The consequences of such actions may include suspension, referral to another educational institution, and/or calling in law enforcement and/or the filing of criminal charges. Discrimination is against the law; and, sexism, when it interferes with the educational learning environment, can and will be interpreted as sexual harassment, and by the dictates of Federal Law can be construed as a crime subject to a criminal investigation.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously
give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson: A Return to Love

THAMES RIVER ACADEMY ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT STATEMENT

Thames River Academy is a regional alternative educational program dedicated to servicing those students who require a smaller venue than is normally provided at traditional schools. Thames River Academy can provide closer supervision within a structured environment for differentiated student learning styles.

Thames River Academy requires 22 credits to graduate. Courses offered include Math, Science, Social Studies / History, English, Art / Technology, and Physical Education / Health Science, all of which are mandated requirements by the State of Connecticut Department of Education. In addition, Thames River Academy requires one credit, equivalent to 100 hours with an additional 20 hours of class work, of Community Service and/or Work Study Internship. Thames River Academy is required by State of Connecticut Education Law to administer the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) to all 10th grade students who must take and pass the test to complete the graduation requirements.

Thames River Academy is dedicated to forming community relationships and providing opportunities for students to gain experience outside of the classroom.

In accordance with State of Connecticut Education Law, parents and/or guardians of special education students who seek admission into Thames River Academy may attend a Planning and Placement Team Meeting (PPT) to determine the appropriate placement of that child. The meeting may include the student, parents/guardians, the Thames River Academy Administrator, a Norwich Public School psychologist, a Norwich Public School nurse, the director of special education and 504 placement at Norwich Free Academy, a Norwich Public School special education teacher, and a counselor and/or special education teacher or coordinator from the child's previous school or system.

Students who have been expelled from a previous high school may not be allowed admission to Thames River Academy during the period of expulsion. In accordance with State of Connecticut Education Law, Thames River Academy honors the duration of a student's expulsion from another high school. Once the duration of the expulsion has expired, the student must first reapply to their previous school for re-admission before they can seek admission to Thames River Academy. Depending upon the severity of the behavior that led to the expulsion and the age of the student, Thames River Academy may or may not accept a student even after the period of expulsion has ended.

Thames River Academy serves the students of Norwich as well as the out-of-district towns of Bozrah, Preston, Canterbury, Franklin, Baltic, Sprague, Lisbon, and Voluntown. Because there is a tuition cost to the out-of-district towns, Parents and guardians from these towns must first gain permission from their district superintendent and/or Board of Education before being allowed to register their child at Thames River Academy. In the case of high enrollment numbers, students residing in the town of Norwich are given first preference for placement.

ADMISSION POLICY

The admission process for Thames River Academy includes the following:

1. The Norwich Board of Education may assign students to Thames River Academy in accordance with the following criteria and procedures:

a. Initial Interview

Upon recommendation of the middle school administration, the students and parents shall schedule an intake interview with the Principal of Thames River Academy. The Principal completes an intake interview form at the meeting. A copy of the Initial Interview Form is to be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools, the school principal and the student's cumulative file, and a team meeting interview will be scheduled. If the student is eligible for special education services, a planning and placement team meeting will be scheduled.

b. Team Meeting Interview (TMI):

A team meeting to review enrollment criteria will include the student, parent (s), school principals, counselor, and school social worker. Team meetings shall be scheduled on a weekly basis. Criteria for enrollment and programming options are reviewed. The team decides whether or not to place the student based on the criteria listed on the TMI Form. A copy of the TMI Form is to be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools, the school principal, and the student's cumulative file.

The team should consider the following in determining enrollment:

Do not enroll if:

- The student has been suspended or expelled due to weapons violation, drug use and/or possession, violence, or threats of violence.
- An expulsion hearing is pending.

Enroll if:

- The student is failing in middle or high school.
- The student is age appropriate for high school but has not mastered middle school content.

Students most appropriate for enrollment exhibit a pattern of risk factors for dropping out of school, including:

- The student has received repeated suspensions due to truancy or repeated minor offenses.
- The student has demonstrated a drop in school grades over more than two marking periods.
- The student has lost interest in former productive activities, hobbies, or sports.
- The student demonstrates a lack of motivation, self-esteem, and self-worth.
- The student has problems with authority.
- Parents are concerned about their child's well-being and his/her future and feel that they need a smaller learning community for him/her.
- The student exhibits a lack of academic success in middle school.

c. PPT

A **PPT** for any student presently classified as needing special services shall be scheduled within ten (10) school days of the Initial Interview. Only a PPT can make the recommendation to place a student with special education needs at Thames River Academy. A copy of the PPT minutes is to be forwarded to Pupil Services, the Superintendent of Schools, and the student's special education file.

2. **Transfer Students:**

- a. Parents/guardians of students seeking to transfer from **Norwich Free Academy** must arrange an In-take Interview with an NFA representative, the Thames River Academy Principal, and the student.
- b. Parents/guardians of Norwich resident students seeking to transfer from **Norwich Regional Technical School, Grasso Regional Technical School**, or another educational institution must schedule an In-Take Interview with the Thames River Academy Principal. The In-Take Interview may be conducted at Thames River Academy, or at Norwich Free Academy with a representative from that school.
- c. **ALL** transfer students must submit **proof of withdrawal** from their previous school before registration can be completed.
- d. CMT and/or CAPT scores will be examined and a Placement Test in Math and/or Reading Comprehension may be given to determine appropriate class placement.

3. **Parent / Guardian / Student Interview:** The Interview is an important aspect of the process. The student and parent/guardian are able to clarify any ambiguous information on the Application, and the Principal can gain a sense of the needs of the student and of

the parent/guardian. It is at the Interview that a relationship and communication between student, Principal, and parent/guardian truly begins. The Interview is the first venue to discuss the need for parental/guardian support in the school-related areas of homework, attendance, tardiness, behavior, and educational/vocational decision-making.

4. **Registration for Transfer Students:** *ALL* Registration materials must be completed before a student is allowed to enter Thames River Academy:
 - ❑ **Proof of residency:** mail addressed to parent/guardian, utility bill, etc.
 - ❑ Student's **Birth Certificate:** if parent/guardian does not possess a birth certificate, one must be obtained at Town Hall
 - ❑ **Immunization records**
 - ❑ **Proof of withdrawal** from previous school
 - ❑ **Registration Packet must be completed at Thames River Academy**
5. **School Records** for all incoming students are necessary to gain an understanding of the academic placement needs based on CMT scores, CAPT scores, and any emotional/behavioral needs based on information submitted by administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, social workers, and/or school psychologists.
6. **Initial Trial/Probationary Period for Transfer Students:** Transfer Students are required to experience an initial trial/probationary period of approximately two (2) weeks at Thames River Academy followed by a meeting between Principal, student, and parent/guardian to determine if the placement of the student in Thames River Academy is appropriate.
7. **Second Trial/Probationary Period:** If the initial trial/probationary period is successful, the student must experience a second trial/probationary period of approximately four (4) weeks after which time a second meeting will be held to determine the status of the student at Thames River Academy. At any time during the initial trial/probationary period or the second trial/probationary period the Thames River Academy administration may request a special meeting and/or hearing to discuss the referral of the student to another program of another educational institution.
8. **Out of District Students:** Parents/guardians of students from outlying districts such as Bozrah, Preston, Canterbury, Franklin, Baltic, Sprague, Lisbon, and Voluntown must first inquire about space availability at Thames River Academy. The parents/guardians must then contact their local District Board of Education and/or the local District Superintendent to seek approval for tuition payment to attend Thames River Academy. Following approval, a Thames River Academy Application for Admittance must be submitted and an Interview scheduled.
9. **9th Grade Orientation:** New incoming 9th Grade students are placed in **B-Shift** with hours from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. An assembly will be held to inform students of expectations,

rules, and regulations, as well as introduce them to all staff members. 9th Grade Assessments will be given to all incoming 9th Grade students for proper placement in classes.

10. **Parent/Guardian Orientation**: Parents/guardians of incoming 9th Grade students may be expected to attend an Orientation where valuable information will be distributed concerning expectations, policies, and school regulations. In addition, the Orientation provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet and begin a necessary relationship needed to help guide students toward success in life and integration into the community as valuable and productive members of society. The time and date of the Orientation will be announced.

ADMITTANCE CRITERIA: IN-TAKE PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

The State of Connecticut specifies that all students have the right to a free and public education; it does not specify that parents/guardians have the right to choose which school the child attends. Each school district has the power to ***“determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school.”*** (Sec. 10-220 Connecticut Education Laws) Norwich Free Academy is the designated high school for the town of Norwich. Students must meet certain criteria to gain entrance into Thames River Academy and may be denied entrance based on the decision of the Thames River Academy Principal.

Out-of-District Students

Thames River Academy serves the students of Norwich as well as the out-of-district towns of Bozrah, Preston, Canterbury, Franklin, Baltic, Sprague, Lisbon, and Voluntown. Out-of-district students are not guaranteed admittance into Thames River Academy, and first must obtain permission from their district Superintendent; the district must pay tuition to the Town of Norwich. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and/or the district.

Regular Education Students:

1. Thames River Academy Will not accept students while on expulsion or suspension
2. Students unable to graduate by age 20 will not be accepted
3. Students already in their 6th year will not be accepted
4. An In-Take Meeting with student and parent/guardian is mandatory
 - a. For NFA students, the In-Take Meeting will be held at Norwich Free Academy
 - b. Norwich Tech and other students must make an appointment with Thames River Academy Principal
 - c. Transcript, credit, and behavior must be discussed
 - d. A Thames River Academy Application must be completed

- e. Students must articulate why they want to attend Thames River Academy on the Application and verbally at the In-Take meeting

Special Education:

Special Education services at Thames River Academy are limited. A PPT must be convened prior to enrollment to determine the appropriateness of placement at Thames River Academy.

1. A PPT must be scheduled for all special education students desiring transfer from any school, in-state or out-of state
2. A special education teacher and/or counselor from the former area might be asked to attend
3. Transcripts and IEP should be reviewed by Thames River Academy prior to PPT, but should at least be available at the PPT

ADMITTANCE DATES

Obviously, applying to any school is most effective when completed prior to the start of the new school year. The Thames River Academy office is open for one week after the last day of school, and one week prior to the start of school.

There are four quarters in two semesters at Thames River Academy. The First Quarter concludes the end of October. Thames River Academy ends admittance of students by Thanksgiving holiday break at the end of November. In these cases, students must wait until the start of the Third Quarter of the Spring Second Semester at the end of January.

Thames River Academy again ends admittance in the second or third week of February just prior to Winter Recess because of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Students may seek admittance after the final day of testing at the end of March.

If students have not gained admittance into Thames River Academy by May they must wait until the start of the new academic school year.

AGE AND CREDIT DETERMINATION FOR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN THAMES RIVER ACADEMY

The Connecticut State Law stipulates that ***“each parent having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district in which such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.”*** (Sec. 10-184 Connecticut Education Laws)

Though school districts are responsible for students through the age of 20, a school district may place ***“in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program a pupil enrolling in school who is nineteen years of age or older and cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one.”*** However, each school district has the power to ***“determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school.”*** (Sec. 10-220 Connecticut Education Laws)

Enrollment at Thames River Academy is determined by space availability, the age of the student seeking admission, and past academic and behavioral performance in his or her former schools. Thus, depending upon the number of students enrolled during any given period of time, the admission of new students may be limited and/or suspended. Therefore, under the guidelines of Sec. 10-220 whereby a school district reserves the right to ***“determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school,”*** Thames River Academy reserves the right to enact the following action:

- Deem inappropriate the admittance or continued enrollment of any student 18 years of age or older with only four (4) credits or less due to the inability of that student to ***“acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one.”*** The student may be referred to Adult Education as an ***“alternative”*** and ***“other suitable educational program”*** for earning a high school diploma.
- Deem inappropriate the admittance or continued enrollment of any student 18 years of age or older with only five (5) credits or less who has spent the previous semester in school with an attendance record that is in violation of state and district policy, and who did ***not*** gain any credits toward a high school diploma during that previous semester.
- Deem inappropriate the admittance or continued enrollment of any student 18 years of age or older who has continuously, meaning during a complete semester, engaged in disruptive behavior detrimental to the school learning environment (whether at a previous school or at Thames River Academy), and who has continuously failed to earn sufficient credit toward obtaining their high school diploma.

EXPULSIONS, REFERRALS, & SUSPENSIONS

EXPULSIONS:

According to **Section 10-233d of the Connecticut Education Laws of the Connecticut State Board of Education:**

(a) (1) *“Any local or regional board of education, at a meeting at which three or more members of such board are present, or the impartial hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, may expel, subject to the provisions of this subsection, any pupil whose conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity is violative of a publicized policy of such board or is seriously disruptive of the educational process or endangers persons or property or whose conduct off school grounds is violative of such policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational process, provided a majority of the board members sitting in the expulsion hearing vote to expel and that at least three affirmative votes for expulsion are cast.”*
(p. 200)

Weapons And Controlled Substances:

(2) *“Expulsion proceedings pursuant to this section, except as provided in subsection (i) of this section shall be required whenever there is reason to believe that any pupil (A) on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in section 53a-3, (B) off school grounds, did possess such a firearm in violation of section 29-35 or did possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime under chapter 952, or (C) on or off school grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in subdivision (9) of section 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties under sections 21a-277 and 21a-278. Such a pupil shall be expelled for one calendar year if the local or regional board of education or impartial hearing board finds that the pupil did so possess or so possess and use, as appropriate, such a firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for sale or distribution such a controlled substance, provided the board of education or the hearing board may modify the period of expulsion for a pupil on a case by case basis.”* (p. 236)

Hearing Board:

(b) *“For purposes of conducting expulsion hearings as required by subsection (a) of this section, any local or regional board of education or any two or more of such boards in cooperation may establish an impartial hearing board of one or more persons. No member of any*

such board or boards shall be a member of the hearing board. The hearing board shall have the authority to conduct the expulsion hearing and render a final decision in accordance with the provisions of sections 4-176e to 4-180a, inclusive, and section 4-181a.”(p. 236)

Alternative Educational Opportunity, Part 1:

(d) “Any pupil under sixteen years of age who is expelled shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity during the period of expulsion, provided any parent or guardian of such pupil who does not choose to have his or her child enrolled in an alternative program shall not be subject to the provisions of section 10-184. Any pupil expelled for the first time who is between the ages of sixteen and eighteen and who wishes to continue his or her education shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity if he or she complies with conditions established by his or her local or regional board of education. Such alternative may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement of a pupil who is at least sixteen years of age in an adult education program pursuant to section 10-69. A local or regional board of education shall count the expulsion of a pupil when he was under sixteen years of age for purposes of determining whether an alternative educational opportunity is required for such pupil when he is between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. A local or regional board of education may offer an alternative educational opportunity to a pupil for whom such alternative educational opportunity is not required pursuant to this section.” (Pp. 236-237)

Alternative Educational Opportunity, Part 2:

(e) “Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (d) of this section concerning the provision of an alternative educational opportunity for pupils between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, local and regional boards of education shall not be required to offer such alternative to any pupil between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who is expelled because of conduct which endangers persons if it is determined at the expulsion hearing that the conduct for which the pupil is expelled involved (1) possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon as defined in section 53a-3, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity or (2) offering for sale or distribution on school property or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance, as defined in subdivision (9) of section 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with the intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administration is subject to criminal penalties under sections 21a-277 and 21a-278. If a pupil is expelled pursuant to this section for possession of a firearm or deadly weapon the board of education shall report the violation to the local police department or in the case of a student enrolled in a regional vocational-technical school to the state police. If a pupil is expelled pursuant to this section for the sale or distribution of such a controlled substance, the board of education shall refer the pupil to an appropriate state or local agency for rehabilitation, intervention or job training, or any combination thereof, and inform the agency of its action. Whenever a local or regional board of education notifies a pupil between the ages of sixteen and eighteen or the parents or guardian of such pupil that an expulsion hearing will be held, the notification shall include a statement that the board of education is not required to offer an

alternative educational opportunity to any pupil who is found to have engaged in the conduct described in this subsection.” (p. 237)

Special Education Hearing:

(i) ***“Prior to conducting an expulsion hearing for a child requiring special education and related services described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a, a planning and placement team shall convene to determine whether the misconduct was caused by the child’s disability, the child shall not be expelled. The planning and placement team shall reevaluate the child for the purpose of modifying the child’s individualized education program to address the misconduct and to ensure the safety of other children and staff in the school. If it is determined that the misconduct was not caused by the child’s disability, the child may be expelled in accordance with the provisions of this section applicable to children who do not require special education and related services. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of this section, whenever a child requiring such special education and related services is expelled, an alternative educational opportunity, consistent with such child’s educational needs shall be provided during the period of expulsion.”*** (p. 238)

EXPULSIONS FROM OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Thames River Academy will honor the expulsion policies of other school districts and educational systems. Thames River Academy will not admit any student who has been expelled from another school during the period of time that the expulsion is in force. Thames River Academy reserves the right to deny admittance to any student 16 years of age and older who has been expelled for the ***sale or distribution of a controlled substance on or off school grounds, or for violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a weapon on or off school grounds***, even after the expulsion period has ended.

REFERRAL TO OTHER EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:

In accordance with State of Connecticut Education Law Section 10-220 that allows each school district to ***“determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils”*** enrolled in each school, Thames River Academy may deem it inappropriate for any student 18 years of age or older to continue at Thames River Academy if that student continually engages in disruptive and/or criminal behavior:

1. Behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment preventing other students from participating in the learning process
2. Behavior in which the student is continually being asked to leave classrooms
3. Behavior that results in the student not making sufficient progress towards gaining his/her high school diploma
4. Behavior that is in violation of local, state, and federal criminal laws, statutes, and codes

A student may also be referred to another educational facility if that student is 18 years of age or older and continually has unexcused absences and/or late arrivals that are in violation of

the state, district, and school attendance policies over more than one semester, and is not earning sufficient credit towards gaining her/his high school diploma.

SUSPENSIONS & DETENTIONS:

A suspension is a period of time from one to ten days. Detentions are given during a thirty minute lunch period or after-school for sixty to ninety minutes.

The following offenses could constitute suspension leading to expulsion: verbal or physical threats, possession of a controlled substance, or possession of a dangerous weapon. The Norwich police, with a drug-sniffing dog, make regular visits to Thames River Academy. At such times, the principal of Thames River Academy may ask certain students to empty pockets, bags and/or other possessions in the presence of the officers if it is suspected that the student may be carrying a weapon or controlled substances, i.e., illegal drugs. According to State of Connecticut Education Law, any student who refuses to comply may be suspended. In addition, the officers may walk the dog through the entire school to check for illegal substances.

Section 10-233c of the Connecticut Education Laws of the Connecticut State Board of Education now provides that effective July 1, 2010, all suspensions from school shall be in-school suspensions unless the administration determines that:

- The pupil being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a serious disruption to the educational process that the suspension should be out-of-school; or
- An out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such pupil based on evidence of (A) previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of such pupil, and (B) efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies.

An in-school suspension may be served in the school that the pupil attends or in any other school building under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education.

State of Connecticut Education Law allows a school to suspend or expel a student if he or she has been arrested for the sale or distribution of drugs on or off school grounds, or who has been arrested for violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon on or off school grounds. Once a student has been sentenced to a detention facility, rehabilitation facility, and/or local, state, or federal jail, prison, or correction facility, it is the policy of Thames River Academy to require a review meeting with that student, their parent or guardian, the probation officer, and/or DCF worker or social worker **prior** to the reinstatement of that student into the school environment and/or classes. Furthermore, that student may be placed on Academic and Behavioral Probation by the school and/or referred to a Student Study Team, Planning and Placement Team, and/or Expulsion Hearing Board.

It is the responsibility of Juvenile or Adult Probation, or another representative of the Corrections Institutions to alert Thames River Academy and/or the representative of the Norwich

Pilot Reintegration Education Program (PREP) in advance of the release date of the student out of detention, rehabilitation, and/or jail, prison, or correction facility so that the meeting can be arranged in a judicious manner.

CLOTHING AND INAPPROPRIATE DRESS

A student may be sent home for the day if that student is wearing inappropriate clothing. Clothes that are **not** allowed include the following:

1. No clothing that show bare midribs
2. No low cut clothing revealing cleavage
3. No spaghetti straps
4. No bra Straps showing
5. No tank tops
6. No halter tops
7. No pants that drop down below the waistline
- 8. No bandanas or do-rags worn**
9. No gang colors
- 10. No baggy pants that expose underwear or gym shorts**
11. No clothing depicting inappropriate messages such as marijuana, violence, alcohol, inappropriate language, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, gang activity or affiliation, homophobia, "gay bashing," or other offensive depictions or characterizations.
12. Shorts and dresses must be of the appropriate length
13. No see-through clothing
14. No pajamas, slippers, or clothing worn to bed or meant to be slept-in
15. The Principal and Norwich Board of Education reserve the right to further define inappropriate clothing and take the necessary action to uphold the rules and regulations

CELL PHONES, CD PLAYERS, AND OTHER TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES

1. According to State of Connecticut Education Law:
 - (a) ***“No student in a public school in the state shall possess or use a remotely activated paging device unless such student obtains the written permission of the school principal for such possession and use. The principal shall grant such permission only if the student or his/her parent or guardian establishes to the satisfaction of the principal that a reasonable basis exists for the possession and use of the device.”*** [Sec. 10-233j (a)]
 - (b) ***“A local or regional board of education may restrict the student possession or use of cellular mobile telephones in the schools under its jurisdiction. In determining whether to restrict such possession or use, the local or regional board of education shall consider the special needs of parents and students.”*** [Sec. 10-233j (b)]
2. In conjunction with State of Connecticut Education Law, Thames River Academy prohibits the possession or use in school of paging devices and/or cellular mobile telephones. The principal of Thames River Academy reserves the right to search any student suspected of, or observed carrying or using any paging device or cellular mobile telephone and confiscate such device and/or phone to be held by principal until the device or phone can be turned over to the parent/guardian.
3. CD players must be turned off and put away immediately at the request of any member of the Thames River Academy staff.
4. Students who bring paging devices, cellular mobile telephones, CD players, and/or Ipods to Thames River Academy are doing so at their own risk. Thames River Academy is **not** responsible for lost or stolen items that have been brought to school by students. There are no lockers at Thames River Academy: students are responsible for carrying and securing their own belongings.
5. Violations of the above rules and regulations will result in detention and/or suspension.

THAMES RIVER ACADEMY RULES AND REGULATIONS VIOLATIONS ADDENDUM

1. Concerning controlled and illegal substances, and alcohol:
 - a. Possession of such substances on or off school grounds may lead to arrest, criminal prosecution, and suspension and/or expulsion from school.
 - b. A student who comes to school under the influence of controlled and/or illegal substances or alcohol may be examined by the school nurse, School-based Health Center, interviewed by police, and/or asked to empty pockets and other belongings.

- c. In addition, an ambulance may be called to take the student to the emergency room at the hospital for examination. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or Probation may be notified.
2. Concerning fighting on or off school grounds:
 - a. Students who engage in physical fighting on school grounds are subject to suspension from three (3) to ten (10) days, and or expulsion.
 - b. If students are caught fighting off school grounds, either during school hours or after school hours, a hearing will be held to determine if the fighting affects the safety of the school environment. If the safety of the school environment is affected, those students engaged in the fight may be subject to disciplinary consequences
 3. Violation of the cell phone policy, even if the student simply has the cell phone out in view, may result in confiscation of that cell phone.
 4. Violation of the dress code policy will result in the following actions:
 - a. Call for a ride home or remain in In-school Suspension or office
 - b. Take off the offending articles of clothing, or wear a t-shirt to cover-up offending areas of the body
 - c. Those who refuse to cover-up the offending area of the body or to remove the offending clothing may be suspended for one (1) to three (3) days depending on how often the student has violated the dress code policy.

GRADUATION AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for graduation are divided into four categories:

1. Four year residency policy
2. Carnegie Unit Credit requirements consisting of class course work and community service and/or work study internships
3. Reaching Proficiency Level 3 on two of the four subject area of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) or completing a CAPT Course and a major interdisciplinary CAPT Project to be presented to, and assessed by the Graduation Requirement Team.
4. Academic proficiency assessment requirements consisting of reaching a proficiency level on various school-wide performance competency expectations.

1. HIGH SCHOOL RESIDENCY POLICY:

All students are expected to complete **four (4) years** of high school during which time each student will earn 22 credits in the areas listed below. Even though a student may earn 22 credits before the end of an academic school year, or before the completion of the four (4) years

of residency, that student may **not** necessarily graduate before his or her designated graduating class, and may be required to attend school during the entire academic school year for the entire four (4) years, taking additional classes for additional credit if need be.

Considerations for a Waiver of the Residency Policy can only be made in such cases that illustrate the student's ability to excel and succeed in all subjects offered at Thames River Academy at such a rate that the student completes the required credits prior to the graduation date. In addition, the student must demonstrate that he/she has achieved proficiency on **all** of the school-wide performance competency expectations and on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT).

The student may be required to show proof of the intention to attend college (college letter of acceptance) in place of attending high school for the remainder of the school year. A letter of intent explaining the reasons for requesting a Waiver must be sent to the Thames River Academy Principal at least one full semester prior to the start of the student's intended final semester. Only the Superintendent and/or the Principal can grant approval for a Waiver of the Residency Policy.

High School Residency also refers to attending school for the **"full hours"** of each school day. "Full hours" for A-Shift students occurs from 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; B-Shift students attend from 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**THAMES RIVER ACADEMY (TRA) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
CLASS OF 2014 WILL NEED 22 CREDITS TO GRADUATE**

- **4 Credits English**
- **4 Credits Math**
 - 1 Credit Algebra I
 - 1 Credit Geometry
 - 2 Credits Math Electives (Math Connections I & II / Statistics / Algebra II / Consumer-Business Math / Calculus / Trigonometry)
 - TRA will accept 8th Grade Algebra of a grade of "C" or higher as 1.0 high school credit
 - TRA will accept the following courses from other high schools as completion of Math Elective Credit: Integrated Math / Applied Math
- **3 Credits Social Studies**
 - 0.5 Credit Civics
 - 0.5 Credit Life and Career Preparation or Social Development or Values Education or Humanities
 - 1 Credit US History
 - 1 Credit Social Studies Elective (International Studies / Comparative Religion / Social Problems)

- **3 Credits Science**
 - 1 Credit Biology with Lab
 - 1 Credit Physical Science with Lab or Earth Science with Lab
 - 1 Credit Life Science with Lab: (Mohegan Park Science Project)

- **1 Credit Art / Technology**

- **1 Credit Health/Physical Education**
 - 0.5 Credit Health and Society
 - 0.5 Credit History of Sports

- **1 Credit Community Service and/or Work Study Internship**
- **1 Credit Accumulated Career-Work Portfolio**
- **1 Credit CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test)**
 - 0.5 Credit in Math or Science
 - 0.5 Credit in Reading or Writing
 - Students who do not pass CAPT are required to complete an Interdisciplinary CAPT Project Course worth 1.00 Credit

- **3 Credits Open Electives**

Total Credits: 22 Credits

CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST (CAPT), PROFICIENCY, PROBLEM SOLVING, & PROJECT-BASED ASSESSMENT:

Each student is **required** to take the **Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)** and do his or her best to attain a score of at least **Proficiency Level 3** in at least **two discipline / subject areas**. An **Alternative Assessment** to attaining Proficiency Level 3 on the CAPT would be to complete the Senior Project Course in which the student must complete an **Interdisciplinary Senior Project** to be assessed by at least four teachers and an administrator designed to assess the competencies expected by the CAPT including Math, Science, Social Studies/History, and Language Arts/English. Completing the Interdisciplinary Project does **not** excuse students from taking the CAPT.

- Every student is **Required To Take The Capt** and attempt to reach Proficiency Level 3 in tenth grade and/or in eleventh grade prior to being offered the alternative assessment for graduation.
- Only students who have reached Proficiency Level 3 or higher are exempt from re-taking the CAPT.
- All students must re-take all discipline/subject areas for which they were absent or left blank.
- Students are only allowed to re-take those discipline/subject areas in which they did not score Goal Level 4 and/or Advanced Level 5.
- All discipline/subject areas must be scored; students who are absent from CAPT or who do not complete subject areas resulting in a “**blank**” response will not be eligible for the Senior Project.

CAPT RETEST

According to Thames River Academy CAPT guidelines, all Eleventh Grade students and non-graduating Twelfth grade students are required to retest in CAPT except those that scored at Proficiency Level 3 and/or Goal Level 4 and/or Advanced Level 5 in two (2) out of four (4) discipline/subject areas.

SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS

Academic Expectations

Students will:

1. Read actively and critically for a variety of purposes
2. Write effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes
3. Employ critical thinking and problem-solving skills effectively in a variety of settings
4. Employ mathematical problem-solving skills effectively
5. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of technology
6. Achieve proficiency in a standards-based curriculum *

Personal Growth Expectations

Students will:

7. Take responsibility for their own learning and behavior
8. Respect human dignity and value cultural diversity
9. Employ sound self-directive decision-making and goal setting
10. Demonstrate behavior patterns necessary for successful employment and personal economic viability
11. Demonstrate the ability to be a contributing member of their school and community **

* *Consisting of specified course content (depth over breadth) correlated with the Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks and state diploma requirements*

** *Includes community service program and/or internship program*

Revised 9/14/2005

GRADE-POINT EQUIVALENT

Grade	Equivalent	Quality Points
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
D-	63	0.5
F	0-62	0.0

CREDIT-GRADE LEVEL EQUIVALENT

CREDITS	GRADE LEVEL
0.00 – 4.99	9th
5.00 – 9.99	10th
10.00 – 14.99	11th
16.00 +	12th

TRANSFERRING TO NORWICH FREE ACADEMY

Requirements for Current 9th Grade Students:

1. **2.25 (C+)** Grade Point Average with **no** Failing grades
2. Completion of at least 4 high school credits
3. NFA expects at least two (2) consecutive semesters (2 semesters in a row) of acceptable behavior, acceptable grades, and acceptable attendance.
4. Acceptable attendance: 10 or less unexcused absences and 10 or less unexcused late arrivals for each semester
5. Acceptable behavior: written disciplinary referrals will be reviewed to determine severity
6. Successful completion of an “**Application for Transfer**” form
7. Recommendations by two (2) teachers
8. Review by Intake/Graduation Committee
9. Final approval and recommendation to NFA by Thames River Academy Principal

NOTE: Most 9th grade students must remain at Thames River Academy for at least a full year. A review of each application and consideration for a transferal timeframe will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Requirements for Current 10th and 11th Grade Students:

1. **3.0 (B)** Grade Point Average with **no** Failing grades
2. At least 10 high school credits earned at the end of 10th Grade or 16 high school credits earned at the end of 11th grade
3. Acceptable attendance: 10 or less unexcused absences and 10 or less unexcused late arrivals for each semester
4. Acceptable behavior: written disciplinary referrals will be reviewed to determine severity
5. Successful completion of an “**Application for Transfer**” form
6. Recommendations by two (2) teachers
7. Review by Intake/Graduation Committee
8. Final approval and recommendation to NFA by Thames River Academy Director/Principal

NOTE: In general, 12th Grade students will not be recommended for transfer to NFA.

COMMUNITY SERVICE / CAREER WORK STUDY / CAREER INTERNSHIPS

“A local or regional board of education may offer one-half credit in community service which, if satisfactorily completed, shall qualify for high school graduation credit pursuant to this section, provided such community service is supervised by a certified school administrator or teacher and consists of not less than fifty (50) hours of actual service that may be performed at times when school is not regularly in session and not less than ten (10) hours of related classroom instruction.” (Connecticut Education Law, Sec. 10-221a subsection f)

According to Connecticut State Education Law one hundred (100) Hours of Field Work plus twenty (20) Hours of Classroom work is equivalent to one (1) credit. In a 180-day yearlong forty-minute class or a 90-day 90-minute block class one (1) credit could be earned in Community Service and ½ credit in English. Community Service is under the direction of the English Teacher and students are required to take the Community Service based course **“Community Connections.”**

ACADEMIC POLICY

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Thames River Academy students are expected to attend class on a daily basis. Wandering through the halls during class periods and/or cutting class is not acceptable behavior. Consequences of wandering or cutting class may include detentions, in-school suspension, suspension from school, denial of credit, and/or referral to another educational institution. Students who arrive late to class are in danger of having their grade for that class drop to a level that would result in failing that class. In addition, every five (5) late arrivals will be assessed as one (1) unexcused absence.

ACADEMIC / BEHAVIORAL PROBATION:

Thames River Academy students who fail to make sufficient and appropriate academic progress due to failing grades, excessive absences, and/or disruptive behavior will be placed on Academic Probation resulting in the loss of certain privileges:

- ❑ Loss of the privilege of participating in special field trips
- ❑ Loss of the privilege of participating in special programs during and after school
- ❑ Ineligibility for Independent Study

If a student does not change their behavior, and continues to disrupt the school learning environment, accumulate excessive absences, and fails classes, the Principal/Director may refer that student to another educational institution.

INDEPENDENT STUDY:

Independent Study is for those students who require a subject to graduate that cannot fit into their regular course schedule. Independent Study is also for those students who require a smaller environment than is provided within the official classes. Independent Study is **not** the same as **“Time Out,”** which is meant for students who are emotionally in need of a temporary “break” from their classroom, or who require a temporary “isolated” environment for the completion of their work for a class. The teacher of the class must first give permission for a **“Time Out”** before the student makes the request to the **Principal**. Students who desire Independent Study must **apply** to a special committee consisting of the principle and two teachers.

Requirements for Independent Study:

1. Students engaged in Independent Study must be at least **11th or 12th** grade and have earned 10 or more credits

2. Independent Study students must have at least a B grade point average without an F in any subject
3. Independent Study students must exhibit responsible and mature behavior:
 - a. Students who have exhibited a tendency to wander in and out of class, engage in disruptive behavior, show disrespect toward teachers and students, and leave class or school without permission are ineligible
 - b. Students who have been suspended from school during the school year and/or semester in which they apply for Independent Study may be ineligible
 - c. Students on Behavioral or Academic School Probation are ineligible
4. Students must have 95% attendance to be eligible for Independent Study (not missed more than 10 days of school during a semester)
5. Independent Study will be limited to the following courses:
 - a. Language Arts / English
 - b. Social Studies
 - c. History
 - d. Science
 - e. Career / Work Study Internship
 - f. Community Service

STUDENT SHIFTS AND HOURS

Thames River Academy has determined that student access to opportunities for success is best served in a small classroom environment. In order to meet the need for small classroom sizes and the behavior issues associated with a long school day, Thames River Academy has divided each day into two (2) shifts*:

- **A SHIFT**
 - A Shift is reserved for 11th and 12th grade students
 - A Shift meets from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- **B SHIFT**
 - B Shift is reserved for 9th and 10th grade students
 - B Shift meets from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- **FULL-DAY PROGRAM**
 - The division of the school day into two (2) distinct shifts is the designated policy of Thames River Academy. Eligible students for the Thames River Academy Program have the right to attend school and gain sufficient credits for graduation within a four-year period of time by attending either the A-Shift or the B-Shift. Students do **not** have the implicit right to attend school during both shifts.
 - Attending school for both A-Shift and B-Shift constitutes “**Full-Day**” and is a privilege accorded only those students who meet certain qualifications and criteria

* Lunch is served at 10:30 a.m., during which time the entire student population is attending school.

1. Students applying for Full-Day status must **file an application** with the principal to be reviewed by a committee consisting of the principal and at least two (2) other staff
2. Students applying for Full-Day status must be at least 12th grade with 13 or more credits
3. A qualifying Full-Day student must meet Attendance Policy guidelines, have a C grade point average with no F in any subject, and exhibit appropriate and mature behavior with no suspensions during that year or their last semester of attendance in the previous year
4. A student who is in his or her 12th grade year at the time of enrollment in Thames River Academy will **NOT** be allowed to immediately apply for Full-Day status. The student must first attend for one full semester, gain at least 3.00 credits, meet Attendance Policy guidelines, earn a C grade point average with no F in any subject, and exhibit appropriate and mature behavior with no suspensions during that first semester or the previous semester of attendance in their previous school.
5. A Review Committee will make recommendation for approval or disapproval for acceptance into the Full-Day Program. The Principal has the final authority to approve or disapprove a Full-Day application, and has the right to override or veto a Review Committee recommendation. The Full-Day Program is not a right; it is a privilege that can and will be withheld and withdrawn if a student is in violation of the above criteria or any of the various other rules and regulations that could result in detention, suspension, or expulsion.

THAMES RIVER ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

School attendance is **mandatory** for all students through the age of 17 years. The Connecticut State Legislature only allows a student to withdraw from school on their own at age **18 years**. Parents or guardians can withdraw their child from school at ages 16 and 17 years.

Thames River Academy Attendance Policy:

- Students will be required to attend at least **95% of their classes** in order to **gain credit**. The State of Connecticut Board of Education considers any child truant who **“has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.”** (Sec. 10-198a Connecticut Education Laws) However, Thames River Academy actually allows five (5) unexcused absences for each Quarter of the school year, or a total of ten (10) unexcused absences during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, and ten (10) unexcused absences during Quarter 3 and Quarter 4.

- An **excused** absence must include **both** a **telephone call** to the school by a parent or guardian on the day the student is absent, **and a note, signed** by the parent or guardian, brought in by the student on the day she or he returns to school. However, the State of Connecticut Board of Education and the Norwich Board of Education considers fifteen (15) excused absences in one school year to be the limit. After sixteen (16) excused absences Thames River Academy will hold a meeting with the student, parent / guardian, Thames River Academy administrator and social worker, and the Norwich Public Schools District Nurse to determine if there are medical reasons causing the absences.
- Unexcused absences **DO NOT** include approved school sponsored activities, suspension days, religious holidays, or approved college visits.
- ***“A certificate allowing the student to return to school is required following an absence of five consecutive days. Saturday and Sunday are included in the five days if the student is absent on Friday and the following Monday. While a doctor’s certificate is preferred, a certificate may be obtained from the school nurse the day the nurse is at the student’s school, or the student may be taken to the local health department.”*** (5113 [b] Norwich Public School Policy) And, because Thames River Academy only has a nurse one day during the week, the parent or guardian must call the school prior to allowing the student to return to school if the school nurse is needed.
- If a student has **11 or more days** of unexcused absences during the first two Quarters of the school year or during the second two Quarters of the school year that student’s credit will be **denied and withheld** regardless of the grades that the student received during that time period.
- Students who have their credits denied and withheld because of excessive absences may **appeal to the principal for an Attendance Policy Waiver**. All appeals must be made in **writing to the principal**. An Appeal for an Attendance Policy Waiver form must be completed at least two weeks prior to the end of the Second Quarter or the Fourth Quarter if the student is over the allowed absence limit at that time. The form is available from the Principal. While the appeal is being considered, the student must maintain perfect attendance and arrive to school on time each day. A student-principal contract may be constructed outlining the requirements of a successful appeal. The principal may require a meeting with the student and parents/guardians. The principal reserves the right to accept or deny any appeals. If an Appeal for Attendance Policy Waiver is approved, the unexcused absences will **remain on record** and could impact the total cumulative number of absences allowed over the time period of two Quarters.
- Students who have been approved and granted a waiver at the end of the Second or Fourth Quarter during one academic school year will not be allowed as a general rule to apply for a second waiver during that same school year or in the next academic school year. Receiving approval for a waiver is generally considered a one-time “second chance”

opportunity. The student is expected to improve their attendance after the waiver has been granted the first time.

- Repeated and continued violations of the Attendance Policy as stated above may result in the student being reported to Juvenile Court for Truancy, and/or requested to attend a Student Study Team meeting with the Principal, school psychologist, and school nurse to assess any serious medical or emotional problems affecting attendance, and/or being referred to another educational institution. In addition, DCF may be contacted for a possible charge of educational neglect on the part of the parent or guardian.
- Students who are late to school without an excuse more than ten times may be denied credit for the class period(s) that they miss.

Early Dismissal:

Thames River Academy considers attendance to school and arriving on time to be a family responsibility. This includes students remaining in school for the full time designated by their schedule. The Principal will only approve of an “early dismissal” for a student if the parent/guardian has given permission for leaving school early through a written note and telephone call. If a student complains of illness and requests the use of the phone to call a parent/guardian, the school must comply with the request. However, if that student is given permission by a parent/guardian to leave school early, the student is responsible for all missed schoolwork and assignments, which must be completed for that student to pass the class. If a student continually complains of illness and requests early dismissal more than four (4) times during a month medical documentation may be required for the early dismissals to be excused. Continued requests for early dismissal by a student, or late arrival to school that begins to impede that student’s ability to pass classes and gain credit, may result in the Principal scheduling a special Student Study Team with the school psychologist and the school nurse to determine if the student may need to seek advice from a specialist to solve the medical problem.

School attendance is a serious matter that is not only monitored by the local school system, but by the State and Federal Education Departments. Students at Thames River Academy are expected to behave in a mature manner; attendance and arriving to school on time are important aspects of gaining the skills needed to succeed in society and at the workplace. We appreciate the cooperation of parents and guardians in guiding our students toward making the right choices in the decision making process.

**PARENT-GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT COMPACT:
PARENTAL AND GUARDIAN SUPPORT IN MAINTAINING A SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR
LEARNING**

Thames River Academy is dedicated to providing students with the required skills needed for success in the world of work, as well as the knowledge and understanding necessary to become an informed and participating member of the community and society. A safe and healthy school environment must be maintained if the school is to succeed in its efforts to facilitate the transference of skills and knowledge from teacher to student. The staff and administration of Thames River Academy request that parents lend their support in maintaining a safe and healthy high school environment free of disruptive behavior that threatens the welfare of students. Thames River Academy is proud of its developing **“School-Parent-Guardian-Community Partnership”** in which the bonds of mutual cooperation and commitment to education are strengthened. **The “Parental Involvement Compact”** will help to initiate and implement strategies to insure that students have a successful and rewarding experience at Thames River Academy that will incorporate the enhancement of academic skills with a greater understanding of social issues, civic responsibility, and a committed work ethic.

Thames River Academy is dedicated to incorporating parents and guardians in a full partnership that insures student success. Thames River Academy offers an **Open House Parent-Guardian - Teacher Forum** each fall semester to allow for dialogue concerning parent and student needs, and school expectations. **Parent-Guardian - Teacher Conferences** are held at least once in the Fall Semester of the school year and on an “as needed” basis to discuss academic progress and behavioral issues. In addition, Thames River Academy has implemented two **Parent-Guardian - Student Award Luncheons**, one in the fall and one in the spring, to celebrate the achievements of the students and to thank the parents for their support.

At the beginning of the school year, Thames River Academy expects the parents and guardians of new incoming Ninth Grade students to attend a **Parent-Guardian Orientation** to discuss the new school environment. It is extremely important that all parents and guardians of new incoming Ninth Grade students attend this orientation to receive valuable information concerning expectations, policies, and school regulations. In addition, the Orientation provides an opportunity for parents, guardians and teachers to meet and begin a necessary relationship needed to help guide students toward success in life and integration into the community as valuable and productive members of society.

Thames River Academy students, staff and parents will work together to create a community of learners and a safe school environment. It is important that parents and guardians are full participating partners:

1. Assist students in gaining the skills necessary for success in the community and the world of work.

In today's increasingly competitive job market, students must be adequately prepared with enhanced writing and reading comprehension skills, and an understanding of 21st Century technology.

- Thames River Academy offers an **Orientation** for new students and their parents-guardians during the first month of each new school year to discuss expectations, academic requirements, rules and regulations, and strategies for success.
- An **"Open House"** is held in the second month of the school year to offer the entire student population, their parents and guardians, and the community an opportunity to walk through the school. Questions concerning academic expectations can be answered as parents and guardians sit down over refreshments with teachers to create strategies for both individual and school-wide success.
- During the third month of school, **Parent-Guardian - Teacher Conferences** are held to discuss particular concerns regarding academic performance and behavior.
- **Clear lines of communication** are maintained utilizing the telephone, Internet, and mail to insure that parents, teachers, and administration are aware of the student's progress and ability, or need for additional assistance.
- **"Student Study Teams"** consisting of teachers, administration, parents-guardians, and students are maintained to create strategies for student academic success and to insure the implementation of these strategies as soon as the need presents itself.
- Parents and guardians are invited to special school in-service workshops to discuss and help develop **"School-wide Action Plans."**
- **The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)** is used as a monitoring tool for student academic progress and skill level. Parents and guardians of Tenth Grade students are invited to the school CAPT Meeting in March of each year to discuss the importance of the test and strategies to improve student participation and achievement.

2. Assist students in gaining a greater awareness of multicultural diversity, equality, gender issues, and respect for all peoples and cultures regardless of sex, skin color, cultural heritage, national origin, religious beliefs, or special needs.
 - Thames River Academy asks that parents and guardians join in the mission of **zero tolerance** for gender bias, racism, and discrimination based on sex, skin color, cultural heritage, national origin, religious beliefs, or special needs.
 - Parents and guardians are invited to assist in special projects and workshops that promote and celebrate **multicultural diversity and equality**.

3. Foster a sense of life long learning and a quest for knowledge.
 - Graduation from high school is merely the culminating event of one of many steps that young people must take to achieve success in the workplace and community.
 - Two “**Parent-Guardian-Student Awards Luncheons,**” one at the end of each semester, are scheduled to offer a chance to celebrate student academic achievement, community service, and school behavior that engenders respect for others. The luncheons are also meant to promote the rewards of life-long learning and a quest for knowledge.
 - Parents and guardians are invited to speak to students about their experiences and the need to continue learning and gaining a greater understanding of the world in which we live.

4. Create awareness for community service and the strengthening of community relationships and bonds.
 - Parents and guardians, along with other members of the community, are encouraged to participate in **community service projects**.
 - During each winter holiday season the Thames River Academy Community Service Coordinator leads the students in the “**Angel Giving Tree**” project to raise money to buy gifts for underprivileged children identified by TVCCA.
 - During the month of April, Thames River Academy students worked with Three Rivers Community College students in the “**Empty Bowls Project**” to raise money for a particular social service-charity organization. In 2003 the money raised, along with bags of groceries, were donated to the St. Vincent Soup Kitchen.

5. Promote and maintain high academic standards along with critical thinking, problem solving, and character development.

- Parents and guardians are invited to participate as **in-school volunteers** and act as **mentors** to students to assist in promoting character development that includes strong moral convictions, critical thinking, and problem solving.
6. Assist in preparing our students to be the future leaders of the community and American society.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to join visiting **community political leaders** in speaking to the students to raise awareness of the importance of the political process and becoming active participants in voting and other civic events and organizations.
 - **Norwich Youth and Family Services** conducts a weekly seminar for ninth and tenth grade students in the Read 180 class to develop leadership skills, team work skills, and promote healthy behavior. Parents and guardians are invited to observe or participate in a particular session with prior notice to the school administration and the Read 180 teacher.
7. Guide students toward an understanding of mature responsible behavior that will adequately prepare them for the workplace, the community, and larger social environments.
- Parents and guardians are invited to work with the Thames River Academy School-to-Career Work-Study Internship Coordinator to bring members of the business community to the school to discuss post-secondary career and school opportunities, workplace behavior, and job interviewing skills.
8. Guide our students in understanding the need to maintain safe communities free of drugs, alcohol abuse, gender bias, racism, and verbal and physical conflict. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend and participate in all related assemblies and presentations.
- Each school year, members of law enforcement and Connecticut Corrections are invited to speak to students about the consequences of criminal and anti-social behavior.
 - Thames River Academy invites members of community health and counseling organizations to speak to students about the dangers of drug and alcohol use.
 - Parents are encouraged to participate as speakers and mentors to promote safe violence free communities.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: SCHOOL-PARENT-GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

Communication is essential for the success of the students and the development of a school-parent-guardian partnership to promote high academic standards and responsible behavior.

- Thames River Academy provides a **Student-Parent-Guardian Handbook** that outlines admission, enrollment, and graduation requirements. The Handbook also outlines rules, regulations, and academic and behavioral expectations. The Parent-Guardian Involvement Compact is offered in the Handbook, which is given at In-take meetings.
- A **Thames River Academy newsletter**, entitled “**Visions**,” is produced by the Journalism class and mailed to all parents, guardians, district administration, board of education members, city council members, and various social service organizations.
- The school secretary and/or principal make daily phone calls to parents and guardians when a student is absent.
- Teachers communicate through use of the Internet, mail, and phone to advise parents and guardians of student academic progress and class behavior.
- The Thames River Academy administration maintains consistent contact with parents and guardians through the mail, Internet, and phone to discuss academic progress, school behavior, attendance, student attitude, and student emotional-psychological status.
- The school nurse maintains contact with parents and guardians through use of the Internet, mail, and phone to advise of student health status, and emotional-psychological behavior.
- The Thames River academy administration conducts **reviews** for all new students with their parents-guardians after the first two weeks of attendance, and after the next four weeks. These reviews are meant to discuss the student’s acclimation into the new school environment and their academic progress and behavior.
- **Student Study Teams** that include staff, administration, the school nurse, students, parents-guardians, and possibly a school psychologist are convened when appropriate and necessary to discuss important issues concerning student behavior and academic performance that may impede progress toward graduation. Often, state agencies such as DCF, Youth and Family Services, and Juvenile and Adult Probation may be called to participate in discussions when necessary.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: INFORMATION

Thames River Academy is dedicated to providing the information necessary for parents and guardians to make informed decisions about their children's education and future.

- During the student-parent-guardian **In-take Interview** the principal and a teacher provide information about the benefits of Thames River Academy as well as that of Norwich Free Academy, Norwich Regional Technical School, and Norwich Adult Education. Student's academic plans are discussed, as well as academic and behavioral expectations. A **Student-Parent-Guardian Handbook** is provided and the contents discussed, including the School-Parent-Guardian Involvement Compact and the various roles and responsibilities that the school staff, administration, students, and parent-guardian are expected to fulfill. Parents are able to provide pertinent confidential information and a list of needs that can assist the school administration in providing the student with a safe environment for learning. In addition, parents and guardians are told their rights under federal, state, and local education law concerning various issues that include Title 1, No Child Left Behind legislation, Special Education under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), Section 504. Parents and guardians are also advised of their right to voice grievances in a verbal and written format.
- A **New Student Orientation** night is held to provide students, staff, administration, and parents-guardians a forum to discuss in greater detail the mission of Thames River Academy, expectations for the school and parents-guardians, a calendar of school events, and the focus of the School Wide Action Plan. The Orientation will also provide parents and guardians the opportunities to voice concerns and strategies, and offer assistance for the various programs and projects offered by Thames River Academy. The Orientation provides an opportunity for more in-depth discussions of parent and guardian rights under federal, state, and local education law. The Orientation is also an opportunity for the students, parents, guardians, school staff, and administration to talk together in a relaxed atmosphere over refreshments.
- An **Open House** is held each year to allow all students, parents, guardians, and members of the community to visit the school and learn about new programs and projects. Visitors will also discuss the direction, focus, and mission of the school as outlined in the School Wide Action Plan, and speak with staff and administration about school and community related issues. Tours of the school are provided to highlight classroom projects, student artwork, and displays of awards and achievements. Federal, state, and local education laws as are applied to Thames River Academy are discussed. Various issues may

include Title 1, No Child Left Behind, Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, and the manner in which to voice grievances in a verbal and written format.

□ **Student-Teacher-Parent-Guardian Conferences** are held each year to discuss student academic and behavioral progress. Parents and guardians are provided with detailed explanations of student grades and academic expectations. Parents and guardians may voice concerns and grievances.

□ Members of higher education, the business community, and the armed forces give special Career Presentations during the school year, to provide information about post-secondary and job opportunities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend, as well as participate in and assist in the organization of Career Presentations.

□ In order to gain information and insight into student needs and concerns, Thames River Academy staff act as **mentors and advisors** to students in academic matters, post-secondary goals, and when appropriate personal issues related to school attendance that may impede progress toward graduation. When appropriate, information is then transmitted to the Thames River Academy administration that decides upon a course of action, which may include contact with the parent-guardian to convey the nature of the issues.

□ Thames River Academy will provide information to parents and guardians on school trips, school assemblies, classroom presentations by outside individuals and organizations, school-wide and class work-study internship programs, and school-wide and class community service projects. A calendar of events will be issued at the beginning of each school year, along with information in the Visions Newsletter, and by mail as new events and projects arise. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in presentations as well as their development. Permission slips are provided for student participation in events, and parents and guardians have the right to request that their child not participate in certain events, programs, and projects.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: REPORTING

Under federal, state, and district guidelines, Thames River Academy is required to provide timely and thorough updates concerning student academic progress, test scores, behavior, attendance, emotional and psychological issues, and any academic, emotional, and psychological evaluations.

- Parents and guardians receive academic progress reports four times per school year, approximately in November, January, March, and June.
- Report cards are sent four times each year, approximately in November, February, April, and June.
- The status of graduating seniors is given special attention through reports by the Thames River Academy administration.
- Reports are mailed home concerning student attendance when a student has four un-excused absences in one month, or when a student reaches five un-excused absences in a semester.
- Reports are mailed home when a student has five late arrivals in a semester.
- The results of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) are mailed when the Connecticut State Department of Education makes such scores available.
- Staff and administration credentials and certifications are made available to parents and guardians.
- In compliance with State of Connecticut Law, teachers and administration are designated officers required to report any evidence of child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- Thames River Academy administration is required by law to provide Probation Officers with student attendance information and any evidence of criminal behavior.
- Thames River Academy administration is required by law to designate any student with four or more un-excused absences in one month as Truant.
- The school psychologist and/or the Thames River Academy administration will provide the results of any parent-guardian approved psychological-emotional-academic evaluations to the parent-guardian.
- The Thames River Academy administration reports all school incidences involving student behavior, especially those that are in violation of federal, state, or local law, or district and school regulations. The report is mailed to parents and guardians in a timely manner.

- Notices of suspension and/or expulsion are sent to parents and guardians, and the school office contacts the parent-guardian by phone on the day of the disciplinary measures.
- The State of Connecticut has determined that a student sixteen years of age or older may be referred to Adult Education based on inappropriate school behavior and/or not making adequate academic progress. Thames River Academy administration will advise parents and guardians on a regular basis as student school behavior and academic progress begins to digress. Student Study Team meetings will be held on regular basis to discuss the content of the reports and the behavior in question.

**INVOLVEMENT COMPACT:
THE CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST (CAPT)**

The Federally instituted “No Child Left Behind Law” has placed a great deal of importance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). The test is given to Tenth Grade students in March and April for approximately two weeks with make-up testing lasting another one week. Participation in CAPT and a score of “Proficiency” on at least one test discipline is required for graduation for the Class of 2006 and all students thereafter. Students who do not reach a score of “Proficiency” must take the test again in the next school year.

- CAPT is discussed during the In-Take Interview Meeting, the New Student Orientation, the Open House, and Parent-Guardian-Teacher Conferences.
- At least two CAPT meetings are held during school for Tenth Grade students. The handouts for the meeting will be sent to parents and guardians.
- Parents and guardians are requested to attend a CAPT Orientation Meeting in March to discuss strategies for student success and attendance during the testing period.
- All parents will be informed of the schedule for CAPT, because of its effects on the entire school schedule and class structure.
- The results of the CAPT will be made available to parents and guardians when the State of Connecticut Department of Education makes scores available.
- Parents and guardians of students who are absent without excuse during any of the testing days, and/or do not reach a score of Proficiency, will be notified immediately and Student Study Team will be convened.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: COMMUNITY OUT REACH

Thames River Academy is dedicated in its commitment to develop community partnerships that include the participation of parents and guardians. Students of the Class of 2006 and all students thereafter are required to earn one credit of community service and/or work-study internship for graduation. Thames River Academy encourages parents and guardians of Ninth Grade students, new transfer students, and all returning students to volunteer their time to assist students in reaching out to the community to develop partnership bonds and ethical character traits for future success.

- Each year, Thames River Academy students team with TVCCA, the Norwich Rose City Senior Center, and participating parents and guardians to engage in the **“Angel Giving Tree fundraiser”** during the Fall Semester to raise money for underprivileged children in Norwich. Parents and guardians are invited to donate baked goods for students to sell to the public at the Norwich Rose City Senior Center. Proceeds are used to buy holiday gifts that are donated to TVCCA who then gives them to underprivileged children in Norwich.
- Thames River Academy works with Three Rivers Community College students and staff, as well as with local artists and social service agencies to present the **“Empty Bowls Project”** each year in the Spring Semester. The Project, developed by the Thames River Academy Community Service Coordinator, combines the production of clay bowls by a local artist, the making of soup by Three Rivers Community College Culinary students, and the leadership and management skills of Thames River Academy students and staff. Thames River Academy students assist with the planning, artistic development, advertisement, and presentation of the Project held in the Three Rivers Community College Cafeteria.
- Each semester Three Rivers Community College students volunteer as **teachers’ assistants, tutors, and mentors** to Thames River Academy students. Parents and guardians are encouraged to join with the college students to act as in-school mentors, tutors, and teachers’ assistants, as well as chaperones for field trips and after school events.
- **Norwich Youth and Family Service** conducts a weekly seminar-workshop for Ninth and Tenth Grade students in the Read 180 class to focus on teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving skills, and responsible ethical behavior. Parents and guardians are welcomed to offer similar presentations, or to join in an in-

service workshop with school staff to develop and implement new strategies and methods of community outreach.

- Thames River Academy schedules the participation of the **business community, members of higher education, and the armed forces** to provide speakers to talk about post-secondary career and job opportunities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to offer assistance in locating speakers through their business contacts, or to participate as a speaker and/or presenter.
- Each school year, Thames River Academy students join with Norwich Free Academy and other Southeastern Connecticut students to participate in the **Norwich Teen Pregnancy Awareness Program** sponsored by the **Uncas Health District**. Students meet to plan strategies to make Norwich teenagers aware of the dangers of teen pregnancy and the resultant issues and problems. The Teen Pregnancy Awareness Program sponsors dances, Halloween parties, and produces a newsletter to provide valuable information to local youth. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend the various functions to support and assist in the efforts of the students to bring awareness to the dangers of teen pregnancy.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: STUDENT RECOGNITION

One of the most important aspects of student achievement is gaining confidence and developing a positive school spirit. Thames River Academy believes in recognizing student academic achievement, community service efforts, exemplary work-study internship experiences, acts of kindness and service within the school, and behavior that illustrates leadership and role model qualities. Parents and guardians are invited to attend all school assemblies in which awards are presented. In addition, parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in the presentation of the awards and attend school meetings to discuss award ceremonies and the nature of the award and recognition.

- **An assembly is held at the end of each Quarter to present awards:**
 - Honor Roll and High Honor Roll
 - Academic Achievement in a particular subject or discipline
 - Role Model Awards
 - Community Service Awards
 - Work-Study Internship Awards
 - Effort and Most Improved Awards

- Every two weeks, a student is selected for the “**Thumbs Up Award**” that exemplifies good deeds and kind acts within the school. The winner is awarded a certificate of achievement and appreciation.
- Presentation of the **Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents’ Award (CAPSS)** is an opportunity for parents and guardians to join with other district students, parents, and guardians in celebration of Norwich student academic achievement, leadership qualities, and service to the community. Presentations are held at a special Board of Education meeting and at the Rotary Club.
- Twice each year, at the end of each semester, Thames River Academy offers a **Student-Parent-Guardian Awards Luncheon** to present special awards and plaques. It is at these Luncheons that special awards are presented:
 - The “**Principals Award**” for special behavior and achievement that exceeds expectations
 - **The Connecticut State Board of Education Certificate to recognize “meeting the state goal as demonstrated on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, Generation 2”**
 - A special **Thames River Academy CAPT plaque** presented to each individual who met goal on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, and a special plaque that will hang in the halls of Thames River Academy that shows the names of every student who met goal on the test
 - Special awards to parents, guardians, college students, and members of the community who volunteer their time as mentors, teachers’ assistants, tutors, and chaperones
 - Special recognition is made at the first Awards Luncheon to those students who finish their credit requirements in January.
- At each school graduation a **Community Service Scholarship Award** is presented to the graduating senior who has exemplified service to the community, leadership qualities, and role model characteristics. The scholarship pays for one course at Three Rivers Community College, and the student’s is placed on a Plaque with other recipients to hang in the halls of Thames River Academy.

INVOLVEMENT COMPACT: ROLES, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Thames River Academy is committed and dedicated to fostering a safe learning environment and providing students with the necessary tools and skills to be successful in the community, the world of work, a multicultural and diverse American society, and in the world economy.

The role of the teachers and staff are to guide students toward the successful completion of academic requirements necessary for graduation. Teachers and staff are expected to work with students, parents, guardians, administration, and designated outside persons and organizations to insure that positive school-wide goals are achieved. The responsibilities of Thames River Academy teachers and staff are to:

1. Provide the necessary tools and skills for post-secondary success.
2. Insure that each student is provided the proper level of material and attention necessary to successfully complete each course.
3. Provide a safe classroom environment for learning free of conflict, prejudice, and discrimination towards individuals based on their sex, skin color, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, or special needs.
4. Maintain adequate lines of communication with parents and guardians utilizing the Internet, phone, and/or mail to transmit information regarding academic progress, class attendance, and behavior of students.
5. Maintain open lines of communication with other teachers and the administration to implement strategies for success regarding academic progress, class attendance, and behavior.
6. Participate in Parent-Guardian-Teacher Conferences to discuss academic progress and behavior.
7. Participate in an appropriate number of Orientations, Open Houses, and after school events to provide parents, guardians, and students the opportunity to discuss school-wide and classroom issues and ask questions.
8. Act as mentors and advisors to students when appropriate.
9. Provide reports to the principal regarding academic progress, behavior, and class attendance.

10. Attend Student Study Team meetings when appropriate to discuss academic progress, behavior, and attendance.
11. Report to the principal any incidences of inappropriate, disrespectful, or potentially dangerous student behavior.
12. Report to the principal, school nurse, and/or DCF any apparent signs of verbal or physical abuse.
13. Recognize students for good deeds, kind acts, and service to the school with the "Thumbs Up Award."
14. Recognize students when appropriate for academic progress, community service, and when leadership and role model qualities are exhibited.

The role of the student is to participate fully in the learning process and behave in an appropriate manner that helps to maintain a safe learning environment. Students are expected to work with teachers, staff, administration, parents, guardians, and designated outside persons and organizations to gain the necessary skills to identify and realize individual educational goals. The responsibilities of Thames River Academy students are to:

1. Complete assignments on time, participate in class discussions, and attend class on time to gain the necessary tools to be successful in the community, the world of work, a multicultural and diverse American society, and in the world economy.
2. Behave in a responsible manner maintaining proper respect for the teachers, staff, administration, and classmates.
3. Behave in a proper responsible manner on field trips, community service projects, work-study internships, assemblies, guest presentations, and all school related after school activities maintaining proper respect for members of the community and persons, visitors, sponsors, and guests associated with the activities.
4. Approach the teacher and/or administration to discuss school issues that may impede academic progress.
5. Follow all Thames River Academy and district rules, regulations, and guidelines as stated in the Student-Parent-Guardian Handbook.
6. Refrain from engaging in behavior that is contrary to federal, state, and local criminal law, as well as State of Connecticut Department of Education School Law.
7. Maintain open lines of communication with teachers and administration to convey needs that will assist in making adequate academic progress.
8. Refrain from engaging in racist, sexist, or discriminatory behavior, or using racist or sexist remarks, or committing acts of sexual harassment with the willingness to report such behavior to a teacher or the principal when such behavior is committed by others.
9. Maintain a positive school spirit with the willingness to assist others less fortunate.

The role of parents and guardians is to act as role models and guides to encourage students to participate in the learning process, complete the necessary academic requirements, and help teachers, staff, and administration to understand the importance of life-long learning in students. Parents and guardians are expected to work with teachers, staff, administration, and designated outside persons and organizations to help students gain the necessary skills to be productive members of society. The responsibilities of parents and guardians are to:

1. Provide the necessary information to the school as stated in the Student-Parent-Guardian Handbook regarding registration and enrollment.
2. Encourage incoming Ninth Grade students to attend a special summer school session to promote class unity and get a head start on high school level academic and behavioral expectations.
3. Assist the school in encouraging acceptable student attendance and behavior.

The role of the school administration is to set high academic and behavioral standards, guide the teachers and staff in developing proper curriculum, develop strategies to maintain a structured safe environment for learning, develop school-wide goals and action plans, and insure that students, parents, and guardians have all necessary and pertinent information for student participation in the learning process. The school administration is expected to work with students, parents, guardians, teachers, staff, and designated outside persons and organizations to help students gain the necessary skills to be successful in the world of work, pursuit of post-secondary education and life-long learning.

Welcome to Thames River Academy

Thank you and welcome to Thames River Academy

Edward A. Derr

Edward A. Derr

Principal of Thames River Academy

Dreams

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*

By Langston Hughes

A Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore -

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over -

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

By Langston Hughes