



The Career Academy
125 Smith Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01851



Culture Handbook

2020-2021 School Year

Through the shared vision of GRIT we provide a gateway to behavioral and academic success.

*Parents/Guardians are welcome to meet with administration and teachers of The Career Academy. To accommodate the needs of all parties an appointment is required and may be made by contacting the school. **At this time we are requesting that meetings be held virtually if possible.** ~ Thank you*

Please visit our web site at <http://lhsca.lowell.k12.ma.us/careeracademy> for important school information as well as the handbook appendix.

*Megan O'Loughlin
Principal*

*Donna Pelton
Clerk
(978) 970-3318*



The Career Academy offers a gateway for its students to achieve current goals through rigorous academics, exposure to career development and building the social skills needed to get there. Career Academy students develop strong, healthy relationships based on respect and tolerance. They are inventive thinkers and attack all goals with tenacity and perseverance. The students' Career Academy experience culminates as they embark on a path to reach their future goals of meaningful careers, maintaining solid relationships and being productive citizens.

School Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 7:45-2:00
Wednesday: 8:45-2:00

Lunch is served at 2:00 PM and students can bring it home with them.

Tardy Bell rings at 7:55



Through the shared vision of grit we provide a gateway to behavioral and academic success.

Behavioral Expectations

Responsibility

Wellness

Relationships



Health and Wellness Expectations

Students will be required to adhere to all social distancing and face mask requirements. Students who repeatedly fail to do after interventions have been put in place so may be asked to participate in remote learning.

LPS FACE MASK POLICY

In compliance with Governor Charles Baker's order dated May 1, 2020, which went into effect on May 6, 2020, and the guidelines written by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), until further notice, all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors entering Lowell Public Schools (LPS) buildings and/or utilizing transportation or school buses, and/or attending or participating in LPS sponsored events and activities are required to wear a face mask at all times. You cannot enter or move within a building without a mask. Masks may be removed for eating – in designated spaces within each building.

Knowing that the use of a face mask can potentially slow the spread of the virus and protects against the transmission of the virus from people who may have the virus and be asymptomatic; we recommend the use of a CDC approved face mask. Either a cloth or surgical face mask must be worn and must cover the mouth and nose properly. The following are not recommended at this time [per CDC guidelines](#): single layer gaiter masks or bandeaus, masks with an exhalation valve or vent, or face shields unless used along with a mask.

General considerations for the use of face masks, please make sure:

- ✓ The mouth and nose are fully covered.
- ✓ The covering fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps.
- ✓ The cloth face covering does not constrict or create difficulty breathing while wearing.
- ✓ The cloth face covering is tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face as much as possible.
- ✓ Keep the covering clean. Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately, before putting on, after touching or adjusting, and after removing the cloth face covering.
- ✓ In general, face masks should be washed regularly (e.g., daily and whenever soiled). Follow laundry instructions as directed.
 - ✓ Don't share it with anyone else.
 - ✓ Do mark the mask with your initials or name in permanent ink.
 - ✓ Don't touch the outside of your mask while it is on your face.
 - ✓ Don't pull your mask below your chin while you are wearing it. Leaving the mask dangling or improperly fitted to your face creates opportunities for cross-contamination.
- ✓ One-time use masks should be disposed of in a trash can.

Exceptions to mask requirements:

- Children younger than 2 years old.
- Anyone who has a medical condition, a disability, or other health or safety factors which impact an individual's ability to wear a mask - a doctor's note will need to be supplied in this situation.
- Please seek further guidance on these exceptions through your school nurse, principal or designee and also work with your doctor.
- Employees working alone in a private office or workspace do not need to wear a mask but must put it on when leaving the office space or immediately upon someone else entering the office.
- Meal times, mask breaks and recess, are times when masks may not be required as long as the 6 ft. distancing rules are applied and teacher/school approved.

It is recommended that everyone wear a plain face mask and/or LPS or college/university logo masks. However, ultimately all masks must follow the school dress code:

“In the spirit of maintaining an orderly and safe learning environment, students are prohibited from wearing any article of clothing or carrying any backpacks or other accessories which are lewd, which promote violence or hate for any individuals or groups, or which degrade the beliefs of others”.

Any other dress that distracts, disrupts, intimidates, or provokes can be deemed inappropriate by the Principal or designee.

Hand Sanitizing Routines

Who:

- Everyone!

What:

- Hand sanitizing

When:

- Upon entry to the building- If on time
- Prior to entering the classroom.
- After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing.
- After using any shared equipment or school materials.
- Prior to and after handling food.
- Immediately after removing PPE equipment.
- After using the bathroom.
- Prior to dismissal.
- After contact with bodily fluids.
- Prior to and after putting on/taking off PPE equipment.

Where:

- When entering the building use hand sanitizer in front hall
- When entering the classroom use hand sanitizer at the door
- When in class use hand sanitizer in classroom
- After bathroom wash hands with soap and water

How:

- Hand sanitizer- use half a pump and rub all over hands. Be sure to cover the front and back as well as in between your fingers.
- Hand washing- wet hands with water, use a pump of soap, lather soap and rub all over your hands and wrists. Be sure to cover the front and back as well as in between your fingers. Follow the poster guidelines.

Why:

- **To stop the spread of germs!**

POTENTIAL COVID-19 SYMPTOMS – Per CDC

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

When to seek emergency medical attention

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you. **Students should not attend school if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.**

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

Medical Emergency Form:

A Medical Emergency Form must be completed and returned to the principal. This form gives information on how to reach parents in case of emergency and provides updated health information on your child from year to year.

Notify the principal of any changes in emergency contact information or state of health during the school year. In the event of the need for medical transport, every attempt will be made to send a copy of this form. Remember, in the event of an accident or illness, the school must be able to reach the parent or another person who will assume responsibility for the student.

Health Emergencies:

Please notify the principal of any medical condition which may precipitate an emergency situation for your child (e.g. allergic reaction to food, insect bites or medication, asthma, diabetes, seizures). The principal will work with you in developing a care plan to meet your child's health care needs.

Illness:

Children must remain home if they have any of the following:

- A contagious illness like chickenpox, flu, or strep throat, until the doctor or public health department official says it is safe to return or the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
 - A rash or skin condition not diagnosed by a doctor
 - A fever that causes chills, sweating or muscle aches
 - Temperature over 100.4 in the past 24 hours
 - Vomiting /diarrhea in the past 24 hours
 - Live head lice
 - Notification by the school nurse/ health department that immunizations are not up to date.
- (Exclusion notice)

Post Illness School Attendance Guidelines:

Children must be fever free without medication and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. According to health department guidelines, a child with a diagnosis of strep throat, impetigo or conjunctivitis, is required to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Immunization/Lab Test Requirements:

School Immunization Law, Chapter 76, Section 15 of the General Laws of the State of Massachusetts requires that all immunizations must be up to date for children to attend school according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations. Massachusetts General Law allows for the school district to exclude any child from school whose immunizations are not up to date.

****New for 2020-21: Meningococcal (MenACWY) required for Grade 7 and a booster for Grade 11 on or after age16****

NEW: Flu Vaccine Required ALL students

- A certified record of immunization from your child's physician is required for entry into school
- All immunization records must be provided in English and include all dates in full.
- Immunizations are reviewed by the School Nurse. In the event of missing or incorrect information, your prompt attention in addressing the error/omission is imperative to assure compliance with state law.
- Preschool Entry Requirements:
 - 4 Dtap/DTP, 3 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 1 MMR, 4 doses Hib, 1 dose Varicella or physician documented case of chickenpox, 1 lead test
- Grade 7-12 Entry Requirements:
 - Childhood series and 1 Tdap, 2 MMR and 2 Varicella or physician documented case of chickenpox. **Meningococcal (MenACWY) Grades 7 and 11.

Physical Exam Requirements:

- School Entrance: Within 1 year prior to entry to school or within 30 days after school entry.
- Physical exams are required for grades PreK, K, 4, 7, and 10.

Medication Policies:

Medications (both prescription and over the counter) should not be taken during school hours, if it is possible to achieve the medication regime at home. Medication to be taken three (3) times a day can be given at home before school, after school and at bedtime.

A prescriber's order is required for ALL prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medications.

To insure your child's safety, all medications are to be delivered to school:

- In a pharmacy-labeled container (ask the pharmacy to provide separate bottles for home and school).

- By a parent/guardian adult, never with the CHILD

MEDICATION WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED IN THE PHARMACY LABELLED CONTAINER.

IN THE EVENT OF A DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING, MEDICATION SCHEDULED FOR THE REGULAR START TIME WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED.

All medications which must be taken during school hours, either long or short term, require the

following forms to be on file in the school health office before any medication can be administered at school:

- A current medication order, signed and dated by the prescribing physician
- A signed and completed parent consent and medication administration plan
- Current photo of student for identification purposes
- Medication will be counted by the nurse in the presence of the parent/guardian/responsible adult and signed on the medication log

According to the Nurse Practice Act and Health Department Policy, nurses are not allowed to take orders from a non- licensed person (parent or guardian). This applies to all prescriptions or over the counter medication.

Medication Pick Up:

Parents/guardians may retrieve medications from the School Nurse and signed for in the medication log. All unused, discontinued or outdated medications must be picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the school year or it will be discarded.

Head Lice: In accordance with the NO Lice POLICY

Children must be treated, lice free and checked by the School Nurse before being readmitted to school. Prevention is the key to controlling this pesky problem. Please inspect your child's hair frequently and call the School Nurse if you have any questions.

Mandated Screening Programs:

Vision, Hearing, Postural & BMI screenings will take place throughout the school year. If you do not want your child to participate in vision, hearing, postural or BMI screening please notify the nurse in writing.

- Vision and Hearing: Vision: year of school entry, PreK-5, grade 7 and 9. Hearing: year of school entry, K-3, grade 7 and 9. Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow up.
- Postural Screening: The State of Massachusetts mandates that all students in grades 5 through 9 be screened for scoliosis. Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow up.
- Heights and Weights: Students are screened in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 to calculate BMI. All information is kept confidential.

SBIRT: (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) In March, 2016, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted an Act relative to substance use, treatment, education and prevention (STEP Act) which outlines the requirements for public schools in the Commonwealth to engage in substance use screening and education. This screening occurs in grades 7 and 9 in the Lowell Public Schools. Information with an opt out letter will be sent home.



Electronic GRIT Cards Coming Soon!

- When students display a GRIT quality including Responsibility, Wellness and/or healthy Relationships, a staff has an opportunity to acknowledge them with a GRIT Card.
- Staff will inform the student that they are receiving an electronic GRIT card and highlight the positive behavior.
- Students are encouraged to inform the Principal and Social Worker when they receive a GRIT card.
- When students receive a GRIT Card, he/she will be eligible for an incentive including Daily, Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly options. (The incentive program will be designed with students and staff during the first months of school)



Electronic Point System Coming Soon!

Each day, at the beginning of period 1, students will begin a new electronic point sheet. Each time block on the Point Sheet has the behavioral expectations including Responsibility, Wellness and Relationships. Thus, students can earn up to 3 points each class period.

Points are earned from Period 1 through Period 6 daily. Students earn merits for meeting the behavior expectations during each class period. Staff makes the decision about the number of points that have been earned for the class during the last 10 minutes of the period. Only staff can complete the point part of the Point Sheet.

Points are tallied at the end of the day by the last period teacher. The student will decide on which incentive they would like based on earned points. Students can choose to not “cash in” and accumulate points for higher level incentives.



Academic Policies

Students will follow an individualized roadmap to graduation. The roadmap will include academic and elective credits earned outside of the classroom.

Graduation Requirements

Students' roadmaps will include the following courses and credits will be earned to lead to graduation:

- Ten (10) credits in U.S. History, Government, World History.
- Twenty (20) credits in English.
- Ten (10) credits in Mathematics. Students must pass Algebra IA, Algebra IB, Geometry A, and Geometry B.
- Ten (10) credits in Science.
- Five (5) credits in Physical Education
- Five (5) credits in Health Education
- 35 (35) elective credits achievable both in and out of the classroom
- Must pass the state mandated assessments.



Attendance

For students to successfully complete their road map and obtain all graduation requirements students will:

- Attend school either in person or log in remotely every day that school is in session
- Be on time for every class and arrive prepared to learn

Steps to Ensure Earning Course Credit:

- Attend school either in person or remotely daily
- Fulfill the course requirements as established by the teacher
- Arrange to make up work due to absences within a **timely manner**.

Definition of Absence

An absence is a day or series of days missed from school. When a student is absent from school, an automated attendance call is made to the home.

Procedures for Parents and Students Regarding Attendance

- The Career Academy follows the District's Attendance Intervention Plan for all absences as outlined on the district's web site.
- Notes regarding an absence will ensure a student is not designated truant.

Documentation regarding absences must include the following:

- Student's name
- Exact date (day/date/year) of the absence(s)
- The reason for the absence
- Parent/guardian name
- Signature
- Phone number

Procedures for Parents and Students Regarding Dismissal

Please be aware that dismissing a student can impact his or her ability to earn credit in a course. Parents are urged to make necessary appointments for students after school hours in order to minimize the need for dismissal.

Students who wish to be dismissed present a parent-signed note either in writing, email or text on the morning of the dismissal before first period indicating:

- Student's name
- Day/date/year and time of the dismissal
- The reason for the dismissal
- Parent/guardian name
- Signature
- Phone number(s) where parent can be reached to verify dismissal
- The name of the person who will picking the student up from school

Please note: We understand that situations arise and there may be times when a student needs to be dismissed unexpectedly by a parent or guardian and we can make exceptions however, if this becomes a pattern a meeting with administration will be scheduled to help assist in finding a solution that does not impact the student's education. People who come in to pick up a student for a previously verified dismissal must present valid identification.

Absent/Dismissed

When a student is absent, he or she will not be allowed to participate in any athletic or extra-curricular activity that day. **Students who are dismissed before 11:10 a.m. will be recorded as absent-dismissed. Students who are tardy to school after 10:45 will be recorded as absent.** Students must be present in school on Friday to be eligible to participate in any athletic events or extra-curricular activities during the weekend. If a student is tardy, absent, or dismissed from school he/she is not to be on the property of any LPS building during school hours.

Attendance and Tardy Procedures

All students must report to their first period class for attendance every day. Students arriving after the official start time of 7:55 will be marked tardy. A pattern of tardiness will result in interventions. Students arriving after 7:55 must report to the main office.

The office will inform teachers of that a tardy student is reporting to class.



School-Wide Behavioral Expectations

Location	Responsible	Relationships	Wellness
Bathroom	Wait quietly Be in and out quickly 1 person at a time Wash hands following best practice Wipe down the sink handles after use	Leave bathroom clean	Flush toilet Turn water off Place trash in barrel
Hallway	Go directly to planned location Use low voice Stay on correct side of the hallways Remain 6 feet apart from others Use the correct stairway Wear your mask	Keep hands and bodies to self Use appropriate language	Place trash in barrel Leave light switches "On" Walk without disturbing classes



In Person Classroom Behavioral Expectations

Activity	Responsible	Relationships	Wellness
Enter the Room	Sanitize hands upon entering Go directly to assigned location Remain 6 feet from others Wear your mask	Greet your teacher and peers Wear your mask	Sanitize hands as you enter Follow the classroom walking pattern Report directly to your seat Wear your mask
During Class	Log into your google classroom Use technology appropriately Use only one headphone as needed Complete work Wear your mask	Work quietly and be helpful to other students Wear your mask	Sit at desk Keep mask on throughout the class Stay within your assigned location Sanitize hands before and after touching anything Wear your mask
Leaving Class	Wipe down desk Sanitize hands upon leaving Follow classroom and hallway traffic pattern Remain 6 feet from others Wear your mask	Hands to yourself Talk quietly Wear your mask	Sanitize desk Sanitize hands upon leaving Walk quietly Quiet hands/body Wear your mask

Remote Classroom Behavioral Expectations

***remote learners are also expected to adhere to all LPS codes of conduct**

Activity	Responsible	Relationships	Wellness
Class	Log into your google classroom either at scheduled time or during the day Fill out the attendance form Review any materials posted Contact teacher if you can't log in to class that day	Communicate with others using appropriate language Offer tech help to those who need it	Ask for breaks as needed
Google Meets Sessions	Follow the same in-school dress code Participate in group discussions	Wait patiently for your turn to speak Use appropriate language	Only the assigned student attends class
Work Completion	Complete work in a timely manner Upload any necessary documents to your google classroom	Schedule times to meet with your teacher for support	Ask for help as needed



Student Movement Throughout the Building Procedure

- When a student leaves the classroom or office, they will receive permission from their teacher prior to leaving.
- Students will wear masks and keep 6 feet away from others
- Students will follow the one way hallway and stairway directions
- Only one student out of class for bathroom visits at a time.
- If a student is non-compliant:
 - Walks out of class without a pass
 - Immediate call to security
 - Office Discipline Referral
 - Refuses to follow social distancing protocols
- Students must remove hoods and earbuds prior to entering the hallway



Technology Usage

The Internet provides access to powerful educational resources that allow students to find information on networks anywhere in the world. *It is a privilege not a right.*

- Use of personal devices attached to the school network must comply with the acceptable use policy.
- Use computers only for authorized purposes and the printers to print only material needed for school related purposes.
- Blogging and e-mailing are only to be used as forums for student learning and communication, and are subject to the rules and requirements of classroom teachers and the school district.
- Use only legal versions of copyrighted software which have been purchased by the Lowell Public Schools
- Conform to all state and federal laws and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Follow general school rules of good behavior on school computer networks just as it is in a classroom or a school hallway.
- Use network storage areas responsibly - Like school lockers, files and communications may be reviewed by the Network Manager at any time.
- Computer use can be monitored by teachers or computer staff at anytime.

*Inappropriate use of technology may result in loss of privilege and/or other disciplinary actions.



2020-2021 Cell Phone Policy Pilot*

Cell phones have become the normal means for parents/guardians to coordinate afterschool activities, schedules, and transportation issues. As educators our job is to prepare you for the future and part of that would be teaching proper cell phone etiquette. Recognizing this reality but also needing to ensure that the educational process is not disrupted and the integrity of testing is not compromised, the following policy will apply to the issue of cell phones within the school:

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be **silenced** and **put away** while in school except as itemized:

- Cell phones and other electronic devices may be used **during lunch and group**. **Silent** cell phone use may occur in the hallways during class changing time. This privilege must not interfere with students arriving to class on time and **the phone must be away, silenced, and no longer in use before entering class**. **If use of cell phones in the hallways repeatedly result in tardiness to class or behavioral concerns this privilege may be revoked**. Silent cell phone use is allowable for students' individual communication needs; photography, recording and videography of any kind are prohibited at all times. **If this occurs the student may lose the privilege of having a cell phone on them while in the building**. This right can be taken away at any point if so determined by administration.
- Cell phone use is allowed in the classroom only with explicit direction from the teacher. An example of this would be using the cell phone for an educational game. **Students may also be granted the opportunity to utilize one earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc during independent working time at the teacher's discretion**. **If the teacher deems the use of the earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc is becoming a distraction to the student or others, such as volume, singing aloud or limited work completion, the student will be asked to remove the earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc**.

Cell Phone Discipline Policy

- **First time** a student is seen or heard using cell phone in class at a time not approved by the teacher, or student refuses to remove the earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc when requested, the student will be given a **warning**.
- **Second time** a student is seen or heard using a cell phone in class at a time not approved by the teacher, or student refuses to remove the earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc when requested the student will receive a **write up**.
- Students who receive **three cell phone/earbuds/headphones/airpods/etc write ups, or one egregious write up, in one day will be asked to turn their phone over to a designated staff member**. The phone will be returned to the student at dismissal.

- **Students who either are on the “no cell phone list” due to repeated offenses or have utilized their phones in a harassing, bullying, threatening or otherwise dangerous behavior will not receive their phone and a parent or guardian will be asked to retrieve the phone.**

Use of the cell phone in unauthorized ways including but not limited to inappropriate picture taking, recording in any manner and harassing and bullying behavior or a complete disregard for the policy could result in more serious actions such as detention, suspension, planning center, etc. Any student who repeatedly violates this policy, or utilizes the phone in an egregious manner will have his or her privilege to carry a cell phone in school terminated until further notice and face other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate.

Though the school will secure the phone, **the ultimate responsibility for any loss or damage remains with the student who violated this policy.**

To limit the distractions from education parents/guardians are requested not to contact their child during the school day via cell phone. Any parent/guardian who feels the need to reach his/her child during the school day is asked to call the main office. In the case of an emergency, students can be reached very quickly.

Earbuds/Headphones/Airpods, etc:

Students must be able to hear the intercom and directives from staff at all times to ensure safety. For this reason, students are not allowed to wear earbuds/headphones/airpods, etc. during transition time in the hallways, during drills or emergency situations.

Repeated use of earbuds/headphones/airpods, etc. will result in the termination of the student's privilege to have earbuds/headphones/airpods, etc. in school.

***If the new cell phone policy pilot is deemed unsuccessful and leads to increased behaviors or interferes with instruction the Career Academy will revert back to the original policy of students not having cell phones on them during the school day with the exception of lunch or group.**



Dress Code Infraction Procedure

- When a student is dressed inappropriately, according to LPS dress code policy*:
 - Student can choose an appropriate article of clothing from Catie's Closet
 - Student can make a phone call home and request a different item from home brought in by guardian in a timely fashion.
- Homeroom teacher or student's first adult contact will assess student's dress and refer to Student Support for resolution of dress code infraction.
- When a student is noncompliant with choosing an alternative to their clothing choice it becomes an Office Referral.

*See Lowell High School Handbook



Please note that the Culture Handbook outlines the culture, policies and procedures that are unique to the Career Academy. Please refer to the handbook appendix for important information regarding the following:

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For your convenience the appendix can be found on our school website.