

# New Canaan High School

11 Farm Road, New Canaan, CT 06840

## Program of Studies 2022 - 2023



*New Canaan High School is committed to preparing all students to meet the challenges of living in an increasingly global and diverse society. We believe that students learn best in an environment that fosters respect for themselves and others. This allows students to be active participants in their learning, to identify and solve authentic problems and to effectively share their learning with the appropriate audiences. In partnership with parents and the community, we strive to inspire students to the habits of mind and character that will make them lifelong learners.*

## Directory

Board of Education	(203) 594-4000
High School Main Office:	594-4600
High School Counseling Office:	594-4649
High School Athletic Office:	594-4639
High School Attendance Office:	594-4672
High School Fax:	594-4700
High School Athletic Fax:	594-4701
High School Nurse	594-4676
High School Special Education Office:	594-4650

### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. William Egan, Principal	594-4686
Mrs. Kristi Carriero, Assistant Principal	594-4677
Mr. Ari Rothman, Assistant Principal	594-4677
Mr. Lawrence Sullivan, Assistant Principal	594-4677
Mr. Kevin Ryan, Special Education Administrator	594-4650
Mr. Jay Egan, Director of Athletics	594-4639

### SCHOOL COUNSELING

Mrs. Cynthia Rivera, Counselor & Chair	594-4659
Mr. Daniel Farina, Counselor	594-4658
Mrs. Lori Keen, Counselor	594-4657
Mrs. Linda McGann, Counselor	594-4750
Ms. Lindsay Reihl, Counselor	594-4731
Mrs. Erica Schaedler, Counselor	594-4648
Ms. Ann Vernon, Counselor	594-4660
Mr. Nicholas Willett, Counselor	594-4661
School Counseling Fax:	594-4652

### PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Mrs. Maria Calcagni, School Psychologist	594-4654
Ms. Eileen Donellan, Social Worker	594-4754
Mrs. Rachel Hartong, Social Worker	594-4642
Mrs. Sandra Warkentin, School Psychologist	594-4656

### DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Career and Technical Education – Mr. James Zambarano	594-4636
English – Mr. Evan Remley	594-4719
Library – Ms. Michelle Luhtala	594-4629
Mathematics – Ms. Rebecca Pavia	594-4694
Physical Education & Health Education – Mr. Jay Egan	594-4638
Science – Mr. Michael LeDuc	594-4695
Social Studies – Mr. Robert Stevenson	594-4678
Visual and Performing Arts – Mr. Alan Sneath	594-4568
World Languages & EL – Mrs. Lizette D'Amico	594-4559
Officer Geoffrey Lambert, School Resource Officer	594-4740

*The e-mail address for any of the above is:*  
**First Name . Last Name @ ncps-k12.org**

## Introduction

The New Canaan High School *Program of Studies* is designed to provide you and your parents with a description of the many courses offered by our departments. While a student here, we encourage you to prepare yourself well for whatever post-secondary path you choose to pursue and, along the way, to experience our diverse academic offerings and the rich variety of electives both within the core academic disciplines, visual and performing arts and career and technical education departments. **While high school is a time to refine and practice your academic skills in preparation for college or the world of work, it is also a time to try new subjects and take full advantage of all the other opportunities available to you throughout your time with us.**

It is our mission “to create the conditions that encourage all of our students to excel” and to that end we provide a breadth of courses for the college-bound and the career-focused that will provide each student, when appropriately placed, with the greatest opportunity for success and continued intellectual growth. We ask that you consider your course selections, keeping in mind your “big picture” but not losing sight of where you are as a learner at this point in your academic development.

Therefore, this guide is provided as a resource and should not be considered a substitute for the recommendations of your teachers, the insights of each department’s instructional leader, and your school counselor. We encourage you to engage your current teachers and utilize their input effectively. The course selection process should provide you and your family with a basis for meaningful, informed discussion. All of us here at NCHS – those listed above, as well as your grade-level administrators – are available to help.

**IMPORTANT NOTE** - All courses listed in this *Program of Study* will be offered unless enrollment is insufficient to justify the reasonable allocation of staff and resources.

## **Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations**

New Canaan High School is committed to preparing all students to meet the challenges of living in an increasingly global and diverse society. We believe that students learn best in an environment that fosters respect for themselves and others. This allows students to be active participants in their learning, to identify and solve authentic problems and to effectively share their learning with the appropriate audiences.

**In partnership with parents and the community, we strive to inspire students to the habits of mind and character that will make them lifelong learners and responsible, respectful, global citizens.**

### **Academic Expectations**

All students will *independently* demonstrate:

- 1.1 the ability to apply analytical and creative thinking to identify and solve problems across disciplines
- 1.2 the ability to reflect thoughtfully on their learning for continuous growth and development
- 1.3 mastery of positive and effective communication skills
- 1.4 an understanding of healthy life choices

### **Personal & Social Expectations**

All students will:

- 2.1 demonstrate the ability to make healthy life choices, including maintaining a balance between academic and personal needs and choices
- 2.2 demonstrate respect for one another and the unique beliefs and choices of others
- 2.3 demonstrate positive interpersonal skills that are essential for collaboration in a diverse society
- 2.4 work responsibly and productively in both independent and collaborative environments

### **Civic Expectations**

All students will:

- 3.1 be an active member of and contribute in a positive way to the culture of NCHS and the larger community
- 3.2 demonstrate the ability to solve problems and make responsible, ethical decisions

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic Integrity is based on trust and mutual respect for your own work and the work of others. Students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members will all work together to ensure that students represent their own work honestly and accurately; acknowledge when the work of others is incorporated; and report to a teacher, guidance counselor or administrator any behavior which undermines our standards for Academic Integrity.

New Canaan High School students will uphold academic excellence and practice responsible citizenship by adhering to the New Canaan High School standards for Academic Integrity. This goal reflects New Canaan High School's role in preparing students for college and beyond, where Academic Integrity is non-negotiable.

### **Student Pledge**

Students will sign at 9th Grade Orientation and each subsequent year

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise to uphold New Canaan High School's standards of Academic Integrity. I promise to treat my own work with integrity and to respect the work of others. I understand that trust, ethical behavior, and fairness are the foundation of a positive learning community and promise to always act with respect for myself and the intellectual property of others. To confirm my ongoing commitment to Academic Integrity, I will add the words "On my honor" to any graded work I submit.

### **Students' Responsibilities**

- **Read and know the school's Academic Integrity Policy.**
- **In addition to observing the NCHS Academic Integrity Policy, observe all course-specific rules and consequences established by your teachers.**
- **Do not copy homework or let someone else copy your homework.**
- **Seek only appropriate help from parents, tutors or other students; check with the teacher to determine appropriateness.**
- **If collaboration has not been specified as permissible, the assignment must be your individual honest effort.**
- **Take responsibility for doing your fair share of a group assignment.**
- **On writing assignments, do not summarize, paraphrase or quote without proper attribution .**
- **Do not discuss any aspect of the test with other students until the teacher has returned it or given permission to do so.**
- **Report to the teacher, a guidance counselor or an administrator if cheating has occurred and how it is being done.**

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- **Clearly explain expectations to students at the beginning of marking periods orally and in writing**
- **Communicate the range of consequences for cheating in class**
- **Clearly state when collaborative work is allowed with the understanding that if it is not explicitly stated, it is not allowed**
- **Be consistent with consequences of infractions**
- **Inform guidance counselors, parents and administrators of any violations of the honor code**
- **Inform other teachers of any honor code violations observed in class (ex. If a science teacher sees copying of a math sheet, he/she will inform the math teacher whose students are involved)**

#### Parent Responsibilities

- Read and know the school's honor code
- Clearly impart to their child how important academic integrity is the expectation that their child will follow the associated rules put forth by their teachers and school
- Require students do their own work
- Support any consequences of honor code infractions
- When helping students with schoolwork, make sure their work is their own.

#### Administrator Responsibilities

- Make available to all students, teachers and parents a copy of the NCHS Academic Integrity Policy.
- Initiate and facilitate ongoing discussions and reflections in the school community about the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Administer fair and consistent consequences for offenses of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Maintain records of Academic Integrity Policy offenses.
- Conduct an annual year end review and reflection of Policy and number and type of offenses. Determine if Policy needs review and update.

#### Some Examples of violations of academic integrity may look like:

- Presenting information collected, organized or envisioned by someone else as your own (with or without the author's permission) or allowing someone else to present your work as his or her own and without proper citation.
- Taking shortcuts (such as unauthorized use of study aids) that allow you to bypass steps of an assignment.
- Using **forbidden material** to "help" during an exam, such as cheat sheets, unauthorized copies of tests, graphing calculators, or any electronic aid connected to the internet.
- Asking about or sharing questions and/or answers to quizzes and exams.
- Submitting the same work for more than one assignment without express permission from your teacher(s).
- Altering corrections or scores with the intent of changing your grade.
- Misrepresenting yourself in any way to your teachers in regard to the work you have done, such as saying you have turned in an assignment when you did not, or that you've worked hours longer than you actually did to complete an assignment.
- Fabricating information to try to earn more time, more credit or grading leniency on an assignment, project or exam.
- Scheduling full or partial day excused or unexcused absences designed to avoid assignments (such as homework, classwork or assessments, etc.)
- Doing more or less than your share of a group project without permission from your teacher.
- Inventing excuses (broken technology, feigned illness/crisis, time constraints, etc.) to explain lack of academic production.
- Using a computer to translate text from one language to another and submitting it as your own translation.

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## Credits Needed for Graduation

### 9.0 Humanities

- 4.0 **English** including *Freshman English* (2 semesters); *Sophomore English* (2 semesters); *Junior English or AP Language and Composition* (2 semesters); *Senior English* electives or *AP English* (2 semesters)
- 3.0 **Social Studies** including *U.S. History* (2 semesters); *one course in Civics or government* (1 semester)
- 0.5 **Visual & Performing Arts**
- 1.5 any combination of courses equaling three semesters in any of the above disciplines, World Languages (beyond first year), Graphics, Business Education and/or Family & Consumer Science

### 9.0 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

- 3.0 **Mathematics**
- 3.0 **Science**
- 0.5 **Career & Technical Education**
- 2.5 any combination of courses equaling five semesters in any of the above disciplines, or technology-based VPA course

### 1.0 Physical Education and Wellness

- 1.0 **Health and Safety Education** including *9<sup>th</sup> Grade Health* (1 semester); *10<sup>th</sup> Grade Health* (1 semester); *11<sup>th</sup> Grade Health* (1 quarter); and *12<sup>th</sup> Grade Health* (1 quarter)

### 1.0 World Languages

- 1.0 **Mastery-Based Diploma Portfolio** *a developed collection of pieces curated by the student over a period of several years that integrates many, if not all of the essential skills acquired over a student's history in secondary schools (see expanded description below)*
- 0.5 one additional semester in either Career & Technical Education or Visual & Performing Arts
- 2.5 five semesters in any discipline or combination of disciplines

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25.0

### **Mastery-Based Diploma Portfolio**

To earn the one credit required for graduation, students will reflect thoughtfully on their own learning during their time at NCHS. In order to demonstrate growth, students must complete an interdisciplinary portfolio that contains three authentic pieces of work drawn from their courses at NCHS that speak to the attributes identified in New Canaan High School's *Core Values and Beliefs*. The student must also complete a reflection which speaks to mastery in the following qualities with specific references to their own work and how it demonstrates that learning and growth.

- **Thoughtful Learner, Active Citizen** - *demonstrates empathy and learning for continuous growth and development and an awareness of the impact one's actions might have*
- **Effective Communicator, Mindful Collaborator** - *shares information, ideas, points of view, and/or feelings in a clear, precise and thoughtful manner appropriate for audience and purpose; listens to others' perspective to consider courses of action to accomplish a shared goal and broaden their own understanding*
- **Resilient and discerning problem-solver** - *investigates and observes a question or explanation or challenge by developing an informed, flexible plan of action to construct solutions or offer conclusions*
- **Innovative, imaginative designer** - *tests and refines ideas by experimenting with techniques and tools to create*

The individual pieces, demonstrating growth over time, can be drawn from the work within a variety of courses across the disciplines, and from different years of study (e.g. an essay from 10th grade, a chemistry project from 11th grade, a reflection on changes in their design process from a Career & Technical Education or Visual & Performing Arts course). **This should represent the student's best work as it pertains to their learning and growth.** With the reflection, the portfolio will include four total artifacts.

The portfolio will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary team of teachers in the spring of each year, with scorers determining if work "has met" or "has not met" the standards outlined above. Students will have the opportunity to revise and/or submit new pieces if one or more of the standards have not been met.



**REQUIRED COURSE LOAD**

**Grade 9..... 6 courses plus Physical Ed or Health & Safety Ed each semester**

**Grade 10..... 6 courses plus Physical Ed or Health & Safety Ed each semester**

**Grade 11..... 6 courses one semester and 5 the other semester plus  
Physical Ed or Health & Safety Ed**

**Grade 12..... 5 courses in each semester plus Physical Ed or Health & Safety Ed**

**\* NOTE - As per CIAC requirements, a student is only eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics if earning credit in four (4) full-time instruction-based courses in the quarter before and during the season; eligibility for football is based on the entire second semester of the previous year. Student athletes should make sure they keep this in mind when planning their schedules each year and monitoring their academic progress.**

**GRADUATION STANDARDS**

To graduate from the New Canaan Public Schools, each student must earn the minimum number of credits (as outlined above) and have met the proper credit distribution requirements (see above), as well as meet Performance Standards for Graduation in a number of areas. All students will need to meet standards in six areas:

**READING - Students will read, comprehend, and analyze fiction, non-fiction, and technical material to obtain information and build an understanding of the text, themselves, and the world around them.**

- A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:
  - achieving a score of 480 or better on the *Evidenced Based Reading & Writing* section of the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT)
  - or**
  - achieving a score of 480 or better on the *Evidenced Based Reading & Writing* section of the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)
  - or**
  - achieving a score of 18 or better on the *Reading* section of the American College Test (ACT)
  - or**
  - successfully completing a course in Reading Center

**WRITING - Students will communicate effectively in writing by applying appropriate structures and conventions.**

- A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:
  - achieving a score of 7 or above on the English portfolio assessment in May of sophomore year
  - or**
  - achieving a score of 7 or above on a revised English portfolio that is submitted to the annual English portfolio assessment in May of junior year
  - or**
  - achieving a score of 3 based on the School Research Rubric on a research paper in either a Junior English or US History course.

**RESEARCH** - Students will engage in research by locating, critically selecting, interpreting, organizing, and synthesizing information from print, non-print, and electronic sources to increase knowledge, solve problems, and construct meaning.

A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

achieving a score of 3 based on the School Research Rubric on a research paper in a Junior English

or

achieving a score of 3 based on the School Research Rubric a research paper in a U.S. History course

or

successfully completing a research project with bibliography in a 12<sup>th</sup> grade Comprehensive Health Course

**MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM SOLVING** - Students will represent a problem using mathematics and will know that math is a necessary tool for understanding the physical and social world.

A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

achieving a score of 500 or better on the *Mathematics* section of the Practice Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT) or Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)

or

achieving a score of 550 or better on a Mathematics Subject Test (Level 1 or 2)

or

achieving a score of at least 20 on the *Mathematics* section of the American College Test (ACT)

or

earning a 75% or better on the Algebra II midterm or final exam in Grades 9, 10 or 11

or

earning a 75% or better on the Algebra II or Precalculus final exam in Grade 12

or

completion of a mathematics portfolio

**SCIENTIFIC LITERACY** - Students will apply the scientific method to discover the rules of nature.

A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

earning a score of 21 or better on the Science section of the American College Test (ACT)

or

earning an 80% or better on two inquiry-based lab activities from the assured experiences embedded in each science course during junior or senior year

or

Earning a 75 or better in each semester of an AP science course.

or

Earning six semesters of science credit with at least two in a physical science and two in a life science course.

**CITIZENSHIP** - Students will understand the ideals, principles, and practices of citizens that reflect a democratic republic.

A student may demonstrate the performance standard by successfully completing a Civics course

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

New Canaan High School's attendance policy reflects the philosophy that **attentive presence in class is essential for academic success**. Legislation mandates school attendance; therefore, excessive absence from a scheduled class will result in the loss of credit for that class. Parents are asked to work with the school in implementing and upholding the policy's provisions.

New Canaan High School will only excuse absences due to personal illness, death in the family, court appearance, religious observance, college visits or emergency medical appointments (see below for more detail). School-affiliated activities (field trips, suspensions, standardized testing, athletic events and special assemblies) that cause absence from class are the only absences that **do not** count towards loss of credit.

The number of absences (**excused and/or unexcused**) permitted in each course before credit is lost is:

Semester courses meeting daily . . . . . 8 absences

**Any absences (excused or unexcused) or tardies (four tardies = one absence, excused or unexcused) beyond the above listed numbers will result in loss of credit.**

Students not in a course for its entirety (for example, students new to the school) will have their attendance requirement prorated according to the amount of time they are enrolled in the class. Students changing courses mid-semester (level changes, etc.) will continue their attendance record from the previous course into the new course.

Parents are asked to call the Attendance Office at (203-594-4672) if their child will be absent from school. **A telephone call or written explanation for any absence is required upon the student's return to school or, at most, within 48 hours of the absence.** Excuse notes must be both written and signed by a parent or legal guardian (regardless of the student's age) and must include the student's name, date(s) of absence, reason for absence and daytime phone number where parents can be reached to verify the note. **There is no negotiation of an absence after the 48-hour grace period.** Unexcused absences from class will not only jeopardize a student's academic performance but will lead to disciplinary actions.

As per Connecticut General Statute 10-210 regarding school attendance and truancy, the school is now required to record the tenth and subsequent absences as **unexcused** unless they meet one of the following conditions:

1. **student illness (Note: all student illness/medical absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence);**
2. **student's observance of a religious holiday;**
3. **death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;**
4. **mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);**
5. **the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or**
6. **extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.**

In order for any of your child's future absences due to illness to be recorded as excused, medical documentation that explains each absence will be required. Until such documentation is submitted and verified, absences will be recorded as unexcused and thus subject to Connecticut truancy statutes.

**NOTE** – For policies regarding reinstatement of credit lost due to attendance (eligibility and process), refer to the "Handbook" section of the Student Planner or the high school's website. Credit lost in Physical Education due to non-attendance and/or being unprepared for class **cannot** be restored; students need to arrange opportunities with their Physical Education teachers to make-up classes.

## GRADES and GRADING POLICIES & OPTIONS

Assessment, at its best, is embedded in the instructional process within every class and is used to improve learning and instruction. As part of their daily classroom practice, teachers use a variety of methods designed to gauge student understanding of the curriculum, including, but not limited to class participation, homework assignments, quizzes and tests, pieces of writing and any variety of means through which students can demonstrate their understanding of the content and skills that comprise a course's curriculum.

For each quarter of the school year, numerical grades represent the teacher's informed evaluation of the quality of assigned work over that period. The final grade for a quarter and a semester may range from 100 to 60 for passing and from 59 to 50 for failure. Although a failing grade is presented on the Report Card no lower than 50, the actual quarter average is used for calculating the semester grade. For each semester, the two quarter grades and the midterm or final exam are averaged for the semester grade for that course; **it is the semester grade that is on the student's transcript**. Even though a number of our courses meet for the full year, credit is earned by the semester and, therefore a full-year course will appear on the transcript as two semester grades (such as, Freshman English will appear on the transcript as "Freshman English S1 and S2," each with a grade and .5 credit earned).

### CREDIT-NO CREDIT

Students may take certain courses on a 'pass' or 'fail' basis, receiving on their Report Card and transcript either "CR" (credit is earned for the course) or "NC" (no credit is earned). **The application for this must be completed by the student no later than two weeks before the end of the first quarter of the semester.** For a full-year course, this option can only be selected during the first quarter of the **first semester of the course**. This decision should be made in consultation with and the signed approval of the student's parent, the teacher of that course and the student's counselor. All interested students should inquire in the School Counseling Office for complete details and the necessary forms.

### WITHDRAWING FROM A COURSE

It is the school's expectation that students will remain in all courses they begin throughout the semester. This is true even when it becomes apparent, at some point in the semester, that the course is proving difficult or the probability of earning a passing grade is not likely. However, if it is no later than **two weeks before the end of the first marking period** in a course (normally, about six weeks into a semester) a student may withdraw from a course. For the second semester of a full year course (a course which continues for a whole year with the same teacher), the second semester deadline for withdrawal from that course is **ten school days from the start of the semester**.

Even if a withdrawal is discussed or planned, **the student is required to continue attending the class until the schedule change is made official**. It is expected that, if by withdrawing from a class the student falls below the minimum enrollment requirements for his/her grade (see p. 5), the student must enroll in another course meeting the same number of times per cycle. All grades and accumulated absences will be carried over into the new course and the responsibility of make-up work shall rest with the student.

If the student is failing, any withdrawal after the dates mentioned above will result in a designation of **WF** (Withdraw/Failure), which will be printed on the report card and included on the permanent transcript. For purposes of computing the GPA, the WF converts to a grade of 50. **No student should receive a WF without the consent of the teacher and the recommendation of the counselor and administration.**

**AUDITING**

Auditing is a means by which a student may sit in on a class for the purpose of learning without the burden of homework assignments and tests. However, with the consent of the instructor, the student may participate in class activities and assignments to the extent desired. No credit will be given for an audited course, although students who carry full academic schedules have found auditing to be beneficial and rewarding.

**REQUEST FOR SCHEDULE CHANGE**

It is expected that student schedules will remain firm and there will be few substantive reasons for requesting changes. Any unusual problems related to correct placement or course conflicts will receive immediate attention from the school counselor. Student or parent requests for change for any other reason must be in writing to the student's school counselor, who will review the request with the appropriate Department Chair. **No student request for change will be considered without a parent's signature or authorization and no request to change teachers will be allowed.**

**GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)**

On the transcript, Grade Point Averages (or GPAs) are reported in a variety of ways:

- **Comprehensive GPA** and **Weighted Comprehensive GPA**, which include all courses (except Physical Education and courses graded as "Credit/No Credit").
- **Academic GPA** and **Weighted Academic GPA**, composed of grades from the following subjects: Mathematics, Social Studies, English, Science, and World Language.

All honors- and college-level course grades will use a multiplier of 1.075 in the calculation of a student's grade point average. All other courses will have a multiplier of 1.000. **Students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses will only receive weighting for the GPA if they take the AP Exam appropriate for that course; students enrolled in UCONN ECE or other college courses will only receive weighting for the GPA if they meet all credit requirements as defined by the sponsoring college or university (such as, but not limited to, earning a minimum grade for the course, earning a minimum grade on the final exam).**

**HONOR ROLL**

The Honor Roll acknowledges students whose quarterly (not semester) grade average is 85 or better for the quarter. Students attaining an overall quarterly average of 90 or better earn High Honors. This is not reported on a student's transcript.

**New Canaan High School does not calculate nor report rank in class.** For the purpose of providing information to give colleges a sense of where an individual student stands in relation to classmates, a grade distribution graph for each class will be included with the student transcript.

**NCAA ELIGIBILITY**

Student athletes considering Division I and/or Division II schools will need to meet specific academic requirements to be fully qualified to practice, receive athletic scholarships and/or compete during their first year.

For Division I schools, for example, a minimum of core courses must be completed in the first six semesters of high school (by the end of junior year) with a defined distribution across English, mathematics, natural and/or physical sciences, and the social sciences. with a minimum GPA of 2.30 in these courses and ACT/SAT score.

**If you are a student athlete being spoken to by a college coach or if you are at all interested in playing at the college level, speak with your School Counselor and plan accordingly as you select your courses each year. You should also visit: [www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports](http://www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports)**

## HONORS and COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES

New Canaan High School strives to provide each student with a program of study that fully engages the individual and encourages a lifetime of further learning. Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses – offered in English, World Languages, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Music and Art – are designed for those students whose academic performance demonstrates the capability, self-discipline, and commitment required to meet rigorous challenges in particular areas of study.

**UConn Early College Experience (ECE)** and cross-registration with **Norwalk Community College (NCC)** provide academically motivated students with the opportunity to take college-level courses while in high school. These challenging courses allow students to preview college work, build confidence in their readiness for college, and earn college credits that provide both an academic and financial head start on a college degree and other postsecondary opportunities.

UConn ECE instructors are high school teachers certified as adjunct professors by the university. UConn ECE faculty foster independent learning, creativity and critical thinking – skills that are essential for success in college and careers.

New Canaan High School offers UConn ECE courses in the English, Social Studies, Mathematics, World Languages and Career and Technology Education disciplines. To support rigorous learning, University of Connecticut academic resources, including library and online classroom access, are available to all UConn ECE students.

### COURSE EXPECTATIONS

**Drawing upon the attributes that have historically defined students who've been successful at the honors or college levels, the following academic skills and habits of mind are what go into a teacher's informed recommendation for each student interested in working at an accelerated level:**

- **the motivation and discipline to complete all short- and long-term assignments and written work in a clear, concise and timely manner**
- **an ability to independently collect, manipulate and analyze information and/or data**
- **a highly-defined ability to independently problem-solve and work with abstract concepts**
- **an ability to acquire and successfully utilize and apply a great amount of discipline-specific content, vocabulary and, as appropriate, mathematical formulae**
- **the focus and responsibility to deal with rigorous pacing of instruction and the pressures inherent within an advanced level of study**

### RECOMMENDATION CRITERIA

Because different disciplines draw upon differing talents, honors placement criteria vary somewhat from discipline to discipline. Specific variations - including those pertaining to 9th Grade placement — are described in department listings. Following are general guidelines employed to equitably assess students who wish to be considered for honors- and college-level placement.

#### **A. Performance in Antecedent Course and Teacher Recommendation**

Prior performance in an antecedent course is by far the most valid and reliable predictor of how a student will fare in a succeeding course. Accordingly, antecedent course grades should consistently demonstrate a high level of success for non-honors antecedent courses and for honors or AP courses. When available, student course portfolios may also be used as a performance indicator for placement purposes. Teachers of antecedent courses can be expected to use their best judgment in recommending students and should be given latitude to freely exercise that judgment.

### **B. Curriculum-Embedded Performance Assessments**

In the Humanities and Social Sciences, and especially in the 8th and 9th Grades, it is appropriate to directly gauge student readiness for honors and AP placement through a curriculum-embedded performance-based task. Typically, such tasks require students to display their capabilities against demands that anticipate those of the course in question. Departmental faculty will evaluate student performance on these tasks and will use the results as a check on the reliability of other placement criteria.

### **C. Standardized Assessments**

Lastly, standardized test performance should confirm the meaning of the criteria cited above. As a general guideline, a student should be among the top 15% of local test-takers. We recognize that weaker performance on a particular test (or inconsistent performance across a number of tests) may not be representative of what a student knows and can do in a non-test setting. Nonetheless, test scores do have meaning and cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. Relatively weak standardized test scores raise legitimate questions about the propriety of honors or AP placement and these questions must be addressed at some point in the placement process.

### **NOTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

To ensure that the course selection process proceeds in a smooth and timely fashion, department committees will finalize their placement recommendations during the third quarter marking period. Students recommended for honors or AP courses are not obligated to accept it.

In this and other program decisions, students should work with their counselors to determine what is in their best academic interests in the context of their overall course load.

**Placement recommendations may be rescinded if a student fails to maintain the appropriate performance standard in the antecedent course through to the end of the year.**

### **APPEALS OF PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Students still wishing to be considered for an honors- or college-level course after the recommendations have been made may appeal the recommendation. Via the appeals process, these students may present reasons why they believe they would be appropriate for the higher-level program. Appeal forms for this purpose are available online and must be completed and submitted by the date indicated. A committee consisting of administrators, school counselors, as well as representative chairpersons and teachers considers the merits of each appeal and recommends accordingly. Parent and student input are factors (see above) considered in the appeal process.