



# Marin's Community School

## Phoenix Academy

### 2018 - 2019 Student and Parent Handbook

Welcome to Marin's Community School, Phoenix Academy, and Oracle Independent Study Programs. We serve all Marin County students and families through a small, highly personalized program that ensures students have all doors of opportunity open to them upon graduation.

#### Mission

We empower each other to follow our passions and lead purposeful lives.

#### Vision

We will prepare ALL students with the knowledge, skills, and habits needed for success in college, career, and life. By deeply engaging each student through personalized learning experiences, our students will master rigorous academic content and develop skills for the modern workplace. Our students will become conscientious global citizens as they solve real-world problems and strengthen their connections to other people and the environment. Through our collaborative, supportive, and inclusive environment, our diverse students will develop their social and emotional skills and find individual pathways to achieve their goals. At Marin's Community School, we value:

- **Multiculturalism:** Solving complex global problems requires cultural understanding, empathy, and the ability to learn and work with others from diverse backgrounds; as well as a deep connection with one's own cultural background.
- **Achievement:** Educational equity is the foundation of a more just society. With the appropriate support and hard work, we can all achieve at high levels.
- **Resilience:** Through robust supports and caring relationships, we can help each other remove barriers to live healthy, purposeful lives.
- **Innovation:** Through reflection, collaboration, and creative problem solving, we will continually improve.
- **Networks and Relationships:** By developing strong relationships, we can positively change the world. Through our networks and relationships, we will support each other to take positive academic and social risks in school and beyond.



## Student Outcomes

All students are prepared for success in college, career, and life upon graduation.

- Academics: Students will master the content knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the modern economy.
- Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits: In addition to academic mastery, all students will develop the skills of self-efficacy, self-management, growth mindset, and social awareness to enable them to continue to learn as they set and achieve their goals.
- Personal Goals: All students will identify a postsecondary path to lead a healthy and purposeful life that allows them to follow their passions and become financially independent.



## Learning at Marin's Community School

Strongly aligned to support our mission, vision, and values, our school program enables students to achieve academic, social, and emotional development through a model that supports and engages students individually through the tenets of rigor, relevance, and relationships.

### Rigor

We engage students through a curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the California Framework for History and Social Science. All of these standards have been recently updated to ensure that in addition to core content, students also learn the skills and habits of mind they need to be successful. When students come to our school, they go through an admissions process through which we determine their academic strengths and areas for growth. Through this process, we develop an individualized education plan for each student that prepares them for a wide range of postsecondary options. Students come with many strengths, and we help students build upon those strengths to establish a firm foundation for lifelong learning.

### *Integrated Core*

Teachers of the core content areas (English, math, science, and social studies) will use their learning spaces and time in flexible ways to ensure that each student gets the support he or she needs to accelerate learning or fill in gaps from previous educational experiences. Students will work with individual teachers as necessary to support their personalized learning needs. Students will be organized in various groupings and will have access to a myriad of instructional strategies including Socratic seminars, small group tutorials, whole class discussion, direct instruction, and individual work and reading time.

### *Social and Emotional Learning*

#### *Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits*

In addition to mastering academic content and skills, all students will develop mindsets, essential skills, and habits necessary to achieve success after high school. Students will increase their confidence as learners as they overcome challenges and learn how to better regulate their own emotions and navigate relationships with others. Every teacher works with a "Learning Coach" who specifically helps coach students on their social and emotional development during class. In this way, students receive in the moment coaching and feedback to develop academically, socially, and emotionally.

### *Personal Goal Setting*

All students will identify a postsecondary path to lead a healthy and purposeful life that allows them to follow their passions and become financially independent. They will work with mentors to set long-term and short-term goals, and to reflect on their progress toward achieving them. Based on these goals, each student has a “graduation road map” to guide them to achieve their postsecondary goals.

### *Project Based Learning*

In order for students to be engaged and to develop an enduring understanding of content, we need to contextualize knowledge and skills for students. Teacher teams will be in regular communication with community members and will identify challenging local and global issues to provide contexts for interdisciplinary work. Project-based learning provides a common experience for all students to make meaning of their learning and develop important skills such as collaboration and communication. At the same time, it provides the opportunity for students to learn at their own pace within a project and to identify their own areas for growth. Having authentic audiences for project presentations adds a level of urgency to the learning process and ensures that students acquire the skills and networks they need for success after high school.

### *Competency-Based Learning*

Through competency-based learning, students advance through the curriculum at their own pace, receiving timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs. Rather than getting credit for seat time, students need to show mastery of certain content and skills in order to advance. This system allows us to support students as they learn at different rates, so that students are neither held back nor penalized if they need extra time to master a concept. Competency-based learning allows us to guarantee that students will be prepared for college, work, and life. Families will hear a lot from us over the year about how this system supports student learning (see Family Engagement section).

### *Immersive Technology*

We will facilitate our learning using technology to support students and teachers, simulating a modern work environment.

Students will have access to individual Chromebooks throughout the day to support their learning and will have access to a wide variety of software that will support their learning. In addition, we will facilitate connections with local, national, and international experts to broaden our students’ networks and opportunities.



## Relevance

Student voice and choice in their own learning is key to providing relevant learning opportunities. At Marin's Community School, students will work with teachers to identify what they are passionate about. For example, if they are interested in immigration, they can study science, social studies, and English standards through learning about immigration. Our projects create situations where students "need to know" something, and therefore are more motivated to learn.

## Relationships

We value networks and relationships as keys to support student success. Strong relationships with teachers, peers, parents, families, and community members will support students in taking greater academic risks, leading to deeper learning. With support, students will develop networks with mentors, community businesses, and universities to expand opportunities beyond graduation, helping them build the social capital they need to expand their opportunities. All students will have opportunities to participate in internships where they learn in the community while developing skills and habits of success for their futures.

## Graduation and Credit Recovery

### Graduation Roadmap

When you enroll at Marin's Community School, you will be assessed for what you already know, and placed in the appropriate courses. We want to ensure that students are always engaged and learning. Each student will have a "Roadmap" to guide them to ensure they graduate from high school prepared for his/her postsecondary goals.

### Competency-Based Grading

Within each course, students may learn at their own pace. If students already know a concept, they may move on in their learning. If they need extra time and support, students will not be penalized for needing more time. Grades in core classes (math, science, English, and social science) will be determined by each student's mastery of the skills and content knowledge of the course. Core courses are designed to be completed within one year. However, if a student masters the concepts in a shorter amount of time, they may move on to the next course. In this way, students can accelerate their learning. Similarly, if a student needs additional time, the grade will be incomplete until the concepts and skills are mastered. Elective courses will each have a set of learning goals that will need to be mastered in order to receive credit. Elective courses will be between 6 weeks to 1 year in duration.



## Grade Reporting

Grades may be modified throughout the course of a year as the teacher gathers more evidence of student learning. We will provide tutorials for students and parents to interpret student information provided through our Learning Management System.

Letter grades will be reported each quarter. If students demonstrate that they have learned concepts they previously did not understand, students' grades and/or credits may be increased to reflect what students know and can do.

## Graduation Requirements

Marin County Office of Education graduation requirements is listed below.

California Law (Education Code 51225.1) provides that foster youth, homeless students, students of military families, and/or former juvenile court students in their third or fourth year of high school shall be exempted from MCOE graduation requirements and may obtain a high school diploma by meeting the state-mandated graduation course requirements **UNLESS** the district makes a finding that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the district's additional graduation requirements by the end of the pupil's fourth year in high school.

MCOE Requirements	California Graduation Requirements
40 credits English	30 credits English
20 credits Math	10 credits Math
10 credits Algebra 1	10 credits Algebra 1
30 credits Social Studies 10 World History 10 US History 5 Government 5 Economics	30 credits Social Studies 10 World History, Culture, and Geography 10 US History and Geography 5 Government and Civics 5 Economics
20 credits Science 10 Life Science 10 Physical Science	20 credits Science 10 Biological 10 Physical

10 credits Fine Arts or Foreign Language	10 credits Visual or Performing Arts, Foreign Language
20 credits Physical Education	20 credits Physical Education
2.5 credits Health	
47.5 credits Elective	

## Community Practices

At Marin's Community School, we understand that relationships are necessary for our success, and that building and maintaining a culture of respect is part of ensuring we support one another. We will co-develop a set of Community Agreements at the start of each quarter, so that all members of our community, including students, are a part of a system of mutual accountability and responsibility. To build and support our community, we will implement several practices.

### Building Habits for Success

Part of ensuring a safe and respectful campus is our intentional focus on helping students develop and strengthen their mindsets, essential skills, and habits of mind. For a fuller description of these skills, see the academics section above. In addition to the classroom, we will reinforce cultural practices that support these skills throughout the school day and week.

#### *Advisory*

Each week, students will participate in advisory activities with their mentors and other students. In advisories, students will get one on one support from a faculty member to set short- and long-term goals, and to self-assess on progress toward meeting those goals, including preparation for college and career. They will build social and emotional skills to support their academic learning and will make connections in order to support each other's success.

### School Expectations and Rules

The following expectations are built on the idea that we are a community and we hold each other to high standards of behavior based on respect for one another, the school and the

community. We promote behavior that leads to the physical and mental safety of all community members.

### *Attendance*

Learning happens when students attend school, and conversely, students cannot learn when they are not here. In addition, because of their group project responsibilities, student's attendance affects the success of their classmates as well. We expect that all students will be at school every day, on time and ready to learn. We are a closed campus so that students can focus on school.

Student absences may be excused by a parent or guardian who should call the main office (415-491-4581) as early as possible the day of the absence. Absences will only be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness
2. Medical appointments (all effort should be made to have those appointments after school hours)
3. Death/funeral of a family member
4. Other justifiable personal reasons including but not limited to attendance at a religious ceremony; college visits; and bereavement. Students should clear these absences with the office ahead of time.

### *Behavioral Expectations*

As described above, we expect students to behave in ways that promote respect and responsibility to themselves, their peers, and their environment, whether in a classroom, at lunch, in the office, or in the community. In the case that a rule has been broken, we will first try to address the harm done to the community through restorative practices, if the infraction does not create a dangerous situation. For a full description of our progressive discipline process, please see the attached appendix.

### *Model Citizenship Before, During, and After School*

As Marin's Community School Scholars, we agree to hold ourselves and others to high standards of behavior before, during, and after school. In the interest of maintaining those standards, as well as our relationships with neighbors and the community, we ask students to follow the guidelines below:

- Cross at the crosswalks, for your safety.
- Don't congregate in neighbor's yards or other places between school and your destination.
- Do not smoke or use other tobacco or nicotine products (they are illegal on school campus and events, even if you are 18).



Because we have responsibility to ensure the safety of students on their way to school, on their way home, and at all school activities on or off campus, students are held to school behavior expectations during those times as well, and students who break school rules, or break the law will be subject to school consequences.

#### *Items Inappropriate or Illegal for School*

At Marin's Community School, we want everyone to be safe and to have a healthy learning environment. Students may not bring any illegal substances or items to school under any circumstances. These items include (but are not limited to):

- Weapons of any type.
- Alcohol, marijuana, THC in any form, or any other controlled substances.
- Paraphernalia for any of the above.
- Cigarettes, vaping devices, matches, lighters (even if the student is 18, these items are illegal at school).

Students should not bring any of the following items to school. The first time these items are found in a student's possession, the item will be returned to a parent. The second time, the item will be confiscated. In the case of inappropriate clothing, the student will have to change into appropriate clothing from home. These inappropriate items include but are not limited to

- Cash exceeding \$40, blank checks or credit cards.
- Any clothing in red or blue gang colors, or with gang-related insignia.
- Any clothing or items with hate language or hate symbolism.
- Any clothing or items with alcohol, drug, or cigarette/tobacco/nicotine advertisement or glorification.
- Any clothing or items with sexually explicit words or pictures.
- Any clothing or items depicting glorification of violence or weapons.
- Markers, spray cans, and nozzles.
- Skateboards.

#### *Dress Code*

In order to maintain a professional environment and to maintain safety for community members, students are not permitted to wear attire that is disruptive to the school environment, that promotes illegal or harmful activities, or that could endanger the health and safety of anyone on campus. Students must follow the dress code outlined below:

- No red; no blue
- No city slogans, team jerseys
- No numbers, area codes
- No bare midriffs
- No bare backs or other body parts exposed
- No hate language or references to hateful content

- No words or images that are judged by staff to be obscene, offensive, violent, sexually explicit, related to weapons, or references to anything illegal

### *Classroom Behavior*

We expect each classroom and all school areas to be safe, calm learning environments. Any student who disrupts the learning process will receive school consequences. If a student cannot respond to the teacher's requests to observe the classroom rules, and office/campus supervision staff must be called, progressive discipline will be implemented including administrative/student conferences, detention, restorative conversations, probation contracts, parent/guardian meetings, probation meetings, administrative suspensions, police contact or expulsion.

### *Sexual Harassment Policy*

Sexual Harassment in any form will not be tolerated in the Marin County Office of Education Alternative Education Programs. Please refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy in the Appendix section.

### *Cellular Telephone/Telephone Use*

Cellular telephones can be powerful tools for learning, collaborating, and communicating. There will be times during school when students use phones for a variety of purposes. However, there may be times when your teacher, classmates or visitors may need your undivided attention, and you will be asked to put your cell phones away. In that case, students must silence phones and put them away, or the cell phone could be confiscated.

Students will only use phones during break and lunch. Otherwise, phones need to be put away (not visible to students or teachers) at all times.

### *Consequences*

- Teachers will take phones to the office. Students can pick them up at the end of the day.
- If students continue to violate the policy, we will have a parent conference and/or prohibit the student from bringing a phone to school at all

### *Computer Use*

As part of maintaining a safe and healthy environment for learning, students must abide by the Acceptable Use Technology Agreement they sign upon enrolling. As with any other device, students may not use cell phones to access inappropriate, illegal, or disruptive content information.

### *Search Policy - Notice to Students, Parents, and Guardians*

In the interest of student health and safety, school officials occasionally must search students and the belongings of one or more students. If this intervention is necessary, the following procedures will be observed.

- School officials may conduct searches of students' purses, pockets, backpacks, and automobiles when students are reasonably suspected of having violated a law or a school rule or when the student voluntarily consents to the search. Participation in non-curricular activities may be conditioned on a student giving consent to being searched.
- Searches of students and their belongings will be reasonably related to the objective of the search and will be as unobtrusive as possible.
- Students who smell of alcohol will be asked to take a sobriety test.
- School officials may conduct periodic sweeps for health and safety concerns and in the event of potentially serious danger to persons or property.

## Behavioral Interventions and Support

### *Restorative Practices*

Restorative practices are a strategy for addressing student behavior before infractions occur, and to repair the harm done to the victim and community. Restorative strategies are used if all parties to an incident are in agreement.

### *Suspensions (Off-Campus and In House)*

Suspensions are reserved to serious or repeat infractions as described in the California Education Code. School officials will supervise students in In House suspension. Students will give up their cell phones, and the teachers or administrators will provide school work for the duration of the In House suspension. After talking to a parent or guardian, we will dismiss students to serve off-campus suspensions at home. Unless students are under the influence, we will ask them to leave campus immediately, and they may not return until the period of suspension is over. If a student is under the influence, we will release them only to a capable adult on their contact list.

### *Probation Involvement*

Our programs have a close partnership with the Marin County Juvenile Probation Department. Probation officers visit our campus frequently to support their clients and to work with students and staff. We welcome the active participation of the Probation Department and recognize their



importance to the safety and success of our program. Probation officers are notified of student infractions if they are on probation, and also of commendations and achievements.

### *Police Involvement*

We have close partnerships with the San Rafael Police Department (SRPD), and the Marin County Sheriff's Office, which has assigned a School Resource Officer (SRO) to our campus. Police are notified if a student infraction is against the law. The SRO provides consultation and advice to the students and adults of the school programs.

## Returning to District/Home School

We offer a safe and supportive environment in which students will gain the knowledge and skills they need for success after high school. Nevertheless, students sometimes wish to return to their District schools for a variety of reasons.

### *Returning to District School*

To receive a recommendation to return to school, students must:

1. Attend school daily.
2. Be on time to class and stay at school for the full school day.
3. Make progress in the high school curriculum through their personalized learning plans.
4. Observe school and classroom rules.
5. Establish appropriate school behaviors.

School District Boards and/or School Attendance Review Boards may set additional requirements students must meet before returning to their district programs.

### *Length of Time Enrolled at MCS/PA*

Some students and families sometimes our supportive, small school environment a great match for their educational needs and choose to stay in our programs. Return to District is always determined on an individual basis. However, some general guidelines apply.

- If a student has been expelled, the district will set the duration of the expulsion and will set the conditions for return.
- If a student has been referred through a School Attendance Review Board (SARB), the student remains in our programs for the semester the referral was made and the following semester. Districts usually want to see a positive recommendation from staff before the student will be re-admitted to a district program.
- Good academic progress, attendance, and behavior will assist students who want to return to their District programs. The District of residence will determine the school each student will attend upon their return to the district. For students with an IEP, the IEP team will determine placement.

## Partnerships

Marin's Community School has many partner organizations that provide services and support to students and families. Below is a partial list.

### *Bay Area Community Resources*

BACR provides therapeutic services for Marin's Community School students, including group and individual services to address substance use.



### *College of Marin*

We partner with the College of Marin (COM) to allow students to visit the campuses, sit in on classes, and co-enroll in college courses. We will be connecting students to mentors and advisors as they make connections that lead to college enrollment after graduation.

### *Golden Gate Transit*

Applications to apply for a free Youth Pass-through Golden Gate Transit are part of the admissions packet. For more information, contact Golden Gate Transit at 511 or at [www.goldengate.org](http://www.goldengate.org)

### *Dominican University Service Learning Program*

Students at Dominican University get the opportunity to work with MCS students through their Service Learning program. They receive training and offer academic and social support to students.

### *Huckleberry Youth Programs*

Huckleberry Youth Programs provides individual counseling regarding substance use and abuse and organizes group sessions around topics relevant to the students.

### *Marin Community Clinics*

Marin Community Clinics provide a variety of resources and opportunities for students who are also their patients. Resources include mental health services, a teen clinic, Health Hubs, access to the food pantry, nutrition classes and more.

### *Marin County Health and Human Services*

Through several departments, our students receive support through Marin County's Health and Human Services Department. They provide on-site therapy, as well as connect families to off-site services as well.

### *Marin County Juvenile Probation Department*

The Probation Department provides daily support to our students through an officer who visits the school daily to establish relationships and to offer advice to the students. The department also provides funding for our support staff, including learning coaches and a mental health provider.

### *Marin County Sheriff's Department*

We have a School Resource Officer assigned to our campus through the sheriff's department who visits the campus and provides guidance to our students and staff.



*Marin Shakespeare Company*

Students get to explore theater and dramatic expression through our work with Marin Shakespeare Company. We also get tickets to local productions.

*Multicultural Center of Marin*

Multicultural Center of Marin works closely with our school to plan and present parent education classes, provide real-world learning opportunities for students, and through shared staff such as our Learning Coaches to support the academic and social/emotional growth of our students.

*San Rafael Police Department*

The SRPD provides a School Resource Officer who knows and mentors students to provide guidance and support.

*San Rafael City Schools (School Lunches)*

San Rafael City Schools provides lunch to our students. Applications for the National School Lunch Programs are a part of the admissions packet. We will support families in applying and you may also purchase the lunches on a monthly basis.