



The High School View

The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by The Martha's Vineyard Times.

Admin says tech policy changes aim to benefit students

BY PENNY HADDAD

Students at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) are facing restrictions on the use of personal devices in school for the upcoming 2024–25 school year. A decision has been made to prohibit the use of personal computers in favor of school-issued Chromebooks, and the administration is currently reaching out to students, staff, and community members to discuss these decisions, as well as the possibility of going phone-free for the entire school day in the near future.

A technology committee made up of administrators and staff members convened to look into ways to address problematic tech use. In response, one major shift taking place next September is that all students will have school-issued Chromebooks in place of personal laptops.

Assistant Principal Jeremy Light hopes that the switch to Chromebooks will lead to more engagement in the classroom. "It's one way we can try to eliminate some distractions, like kids playing games and texting during class. We're trying to create the conditions for more focus in the classrooms," he said. "Students will get a Chromebook their freshman year, and be able to keep it until

they graduate."

Informational technology (IT) director Rick Mello said, "Switching to the Chromebooks homogenizes the technical system that we have to deal with. Each and every Chromebook is essentially identical, so I can control it from the Google admin," which helps to keep the school's networks safe and prevent students from accessing sites that are not safe or

conducive to learning.

Since the Chromebooks will only have a number of approved programs, there's less room for cheating, too. "I get asked about things like academic integrity," said Mr. Mello, "and now hopefully we'll be able to disable screenshots during exam time, for example."

Personal laptops have been functioning much like a smartphone in class, as

they allow students access to apps like iMessage, Spotify, YouTube, and ChatGPT. The current expectation around smartphones, however, is that teachers collect phones at the beginning of each class. Students are still able to use their phones between classes and during flex time and lunch, but the school is looking at curbing phone use in these in-between times, too.

"I think that removing phones from the school day will ultimately end up making people feel better," said Principal Sara Dingley. "Our hope is that it will make people feel more connected to each other, allow people to take a pause [from checking their phone] for 6½ hours during the day, making being present and being engaged with academic content and people the primary focus," she said.

Senior Marin Gillis be-

lieves that if the policies had been implemented sooner, it would have been beneficial to her mental health. "Confidence would have come a lot sooner," she said, "so I think for the mental health aspect, a lot of people are going to benefit from this. Knowing that everyone else in the building, every other student, is in the same boat, and doesn't have their phone — knowing you're not missing out on something — that's going to help."

Mr. Light says he understands the pushback and why many are upset right now, but he wants everyone, specifically students, to know the reason for pursuing this change. "We're doing this to support you, not to penalize you," he said. "It doesn't feel like that right now, but I assure you that is the reasoning behind it. It's more that we care about you than we want to get you in trouble." **HSV**



Principal Sara Dingley and members of the School Advisory Council led a discussion at the school's community forum on April 23.

COURTESY JUSTINE DEOLIVEIRA

Softball team welcomes new players of all skill levels

BY LULU WHITE AND NATALIE WAMBU

The softball team at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) is about halfway through their spring season, and things are looking up for the previously underrepresented sport.

The varsity squad is carrying 21 players this year, many of whom have little to no experience playing the sport. Coach Tiffany McCarty decided it would be more beneficial to have a larger team, rather than split up the team into varsity and junior varsity, despite the fact that they have enough players.

Sophomore Kylee Brasefield

has been playing softball since sixth grade. "I really credit the number of new players to our new coach," she said. "She really wants to make sure we all have fun, and is super-welcoming to people of any skill level. It doesn't matter if you've been playing for years or if it's the first time you've held a bat, she makes you feel welcome."

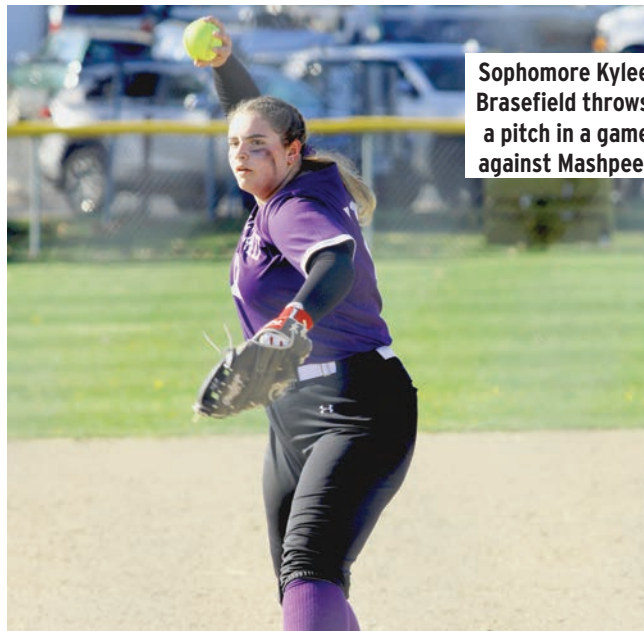
Junior Delilah Oliver said, "I think most of the new recruits have come from social media. The coaches did a lot of posting, so that encouraged people [to come out for the team]."

Some students joined this year because their friends were interested. Junior

Aedan Coogan is new to softball. She said, "I was encouraged by Delilah to join softball. I played for less than a year in seventh grade, so I feel like I'm really just starting this year."

A large number of new players means the practices tend to be focused on skills and developing trust as a team. Aedan said, "I really love base running and sliding. I'm so new to it that I'm not afraid of getting messy with it. It just gives me such an adrenaline rush."

Despite the opportunities to run around and get dirty, both Aedan and Delilah say that playing for this team is much more relaxing than



Sophomore Kylee Brasefield throws a pitch in a game against Mashpee.

TEVIN ARAUJO

other teams they've played on, especially soccer, which they've played competitively for many years.

Aedan said, "This is easier than other sports I've played before. [Coach McCarty]

doesn't push us too hard, which has really made me want to push myself more. For example, I'm a fast base runner, but I want to work to get even faster."

The team hopes to foster a

group dynamic that is really supportive of one another, both on and off the field.

"I love everything about playing softball," said Kylee. "Playing is a really good way to relieve my stress, and I just get to be around my teammates and friends. I really love it."

Delilah said, "I would say traveling with the team [is my favorite part], it's really fun."

Freshman captain Kelly Pacheco invites different team members to stand in as alternate captains when meeting with opposing teams on the field before games. "I think it helps players feel appreciated, and get a sense of what the role of being a team captain is like," she said.

The team is 5-5 so far this season. Their next home game is on Saturday, May 11, at 11:30 at the MVRHS softball field. **HSV**

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