

# WAMS



## WEST ALLEGHENY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2022 – 2023

## Welcome to WAMS!

Dear Students and Parents:

We are very happy to have you at West Allegheny Middle School (WAMS)! This is an exciting school year, and we cannot wait to greet you on the first day! We are all committed to helping you have a successful year and are looking forward to providing you with opportunities to learn and grow in a positive manner.

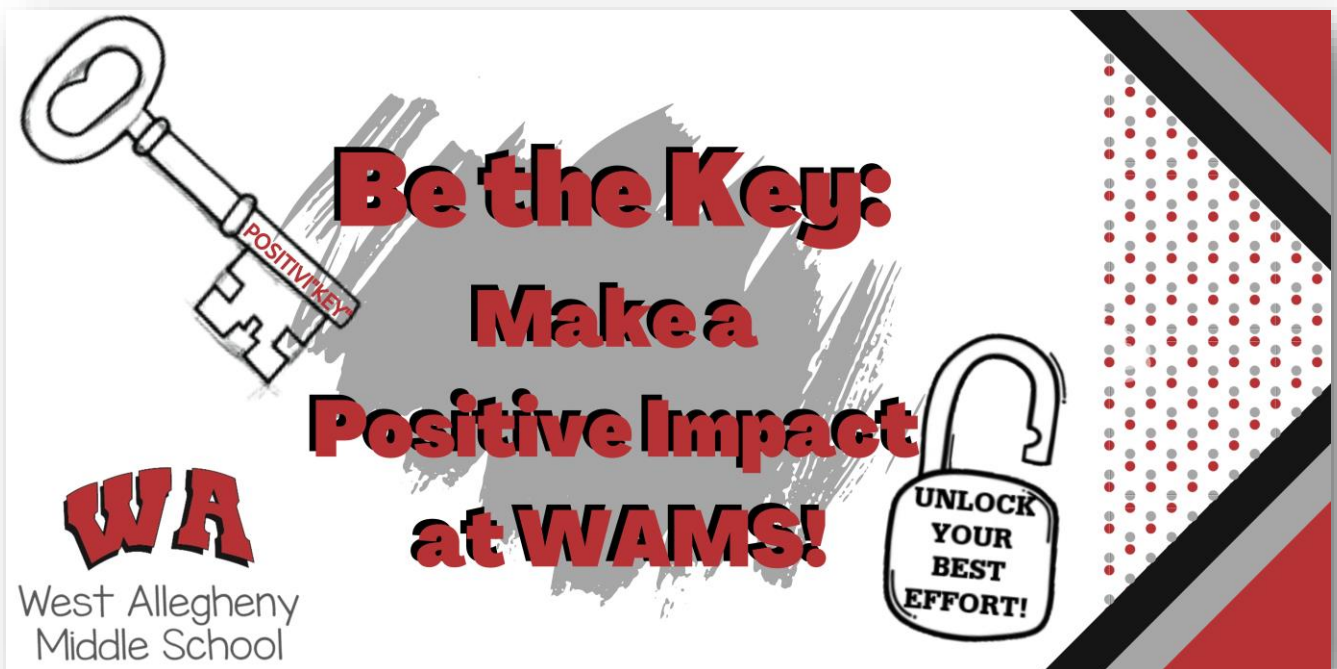
The purpose of this handbook is to help you become aware of the routines and procedures and responsibilities as a citizen of this school. Please read this handbook and share it with your parents. The information, procedures, rules, guidelines, and policies in this handbook should be a good resource to help you find success at WAMS. Let's work together to make this school year a positive, rewarding experience!

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to communicate with the school and talk with the teachers and staff through e-mail, telephone and team conferences. Conferences can be set up through the Student Services office. Please do not hesitate to contact us and reach out for any assistance.

We value you and look forward to getting to know you over the upcoming school year!

**Mrs. Patricia Nolan**  
Principal

**Ms. Megan L. Huchko**  
Assistant Principal



**MEET OUR STAFF:**

Mrs. Patricia Nolan, Principal  
 Ms. Megan Huchko, Assistant Principal  
 Mr. Drew Janectic, School Resource Officer

**GRADE 6**

Mrs. Mary Jo Seybert  
 Mr. Bill Britton  
 Ms. Lea Hartzog  
 Mrs. Valerie Meehan  
 Mr. Scott McCracken  
 Mr. Ryan Cleary  
 Mr. Tom Burke  
 Mrs. Beth Ann Swartzwelder  
 Mr. Rik Mason  
 Mrs. Gabby Monti  
 Mrs. Nancy Watkins

**GRADE 7**

Mrs. Elizabeth Barron  
 Mrs. Anita Berich  
 Mrs. Jessica Henry  
 Ms. Francesca Corrado  
 Mrs. Lauren Siciliano  
 Mrs. Renee Alfera  
 Mrs. Bobbi Jo Buggey  
 Mr. Trevor Kerr  
 Mr. Ben Bezems  
 Mr. Todd Rasbach  
 Ms. Justine Yanosik

**GRADE 8**

Mrs. Rachel Adair  
 Mr. Josh Bears  
 Mr. Brian Karcz  
 Ms. Dana McCaskey  
 Ms. Lauren Petraglia  
 Mrs. Rebecca Sabin  
 Mrs. Jackie Schmidt  
 Ms. Marcella Selestow  
 Mrs. Jenna Lucci  
 Mrs. Katie Troup  
 Mr. Trevor Kerr

**NURSE**

Mrs. Mary Beth Hill

**APPLIED ARTS**

Mrs. Anita Berich, ASL  
 Mrs. Jennifer Cook, FCS  
 Mr. Jonathan Denk, Librarian, MTSS  
 Mr. Steve Groba, Instrumental Music  
 Mrs. Sharon Harn, Art  
 Mr. Robert Mayo, Pre-Engineering Fabrication and Manufacturing  
 Ms. Allison McLaren, Spanish/ESL  
 Mrs. Carrie Morgan, Computer Applications  
 Mrs. Kim Patterson, German  
 Mrs. Terisa Sharlow, Vocal Music  
 Mrs. Bonnie Sikorski, Innovation and Design  
 Mr. Andrew Peters, World Music/Garage Band

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH**

Ms. Angela Devereaux, Health  
 Mrs. Mindy McFate, Health  
 Mrs. Erin Rakoci, Physical Education  
 Mr. Curt Russell, Physical Education

**STUDENT SERVICES**

Mrs. Pearl Hellmann, LS Counselor & Social Worker  
 Mr. Jeff Kiser, Counselor – Last Names A - L  
 Mrs. Melissa Rectenwald, Counselor – Last Names M – Z  
 Mrs. Noelle Marinelli, Family Links Therapist  
 Mrs. Jamie Kruger, Family Links Therapist  
 Mrs. Kaitlyn Kennedy, Family Links Therapist

**EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

Mrs. Erin Clay, LS-6  
 Mrs. Heather Cozzo, LS-7  
 Mrs. Krista Dapper, Speech and Horizons  
 Mrs. Julie Hahka, LS-8  
 Ms. Coleen Scott, Life Skills  
 Mr. Brian Lambert, LS-6  
 Mrs. Amy Healy, LS – 8  
 Mrs. Jackie Schmidt, MTSS Coordinator  
 Mrs. Lisa Panucci, LS - 7  
 Mrs. Leda Niccolai, Reading Specialist  
 Mr. Johnny Camello, Building Substitute

**OFFICE PERSONNEL**

Mrs. Leigh Ann Dunaway, Clerk  
 Mrs. Rona Stewart, Guidance Clerk  
 Mrs. Renee Taddeo, Secretary

**PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Mrs. Michelle Baird  
 Mrs. Jill Dudek  
 Mrs. Cindy Antos  
 Mrs. Tiffany Hegner  
 Mrs. Renee Kot  
 Mrs. Ann Lutz  
 Mrs. Christina Norris  
 Mrs. Lisa Pichi

**CAFETERIA STAFF**

Mrs. Susan Burgoon  
 Mrs. Barbara Calderone  
 Mrs. Marcy Gates  
 Mrs. Dana Hannah  
 Mrs. Mary Jo Kisow  
 Mrs. Denise Lacek  
 Mrs. Tiffany Metz  
 Mrs. Trish Mihalik  
 Mrs. Mary Ann Naughton  
 Mrs. Elaine Vattimo

**CUSTODIAL STAFF**

Mrs. Leandra Block  
 Mr. Joe Cyprych  
 Mrs. Kathleen Feeney  
 Mr. David Leaf  
 Mr. Will Reynolds  
 Mrs. Diane Smith

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## Bell Schedules

Regular				
	Start	Length	End	Transition
1	7:35	0:50	8:25	0:03
2	8:28	0:42	9:10	0:03
3	9:13	0:42	9:55	0:03
4	9:58	0:42	10:40	0:03
5	10:43	0:42	11:25	0:03
6	11:28	0:42	12:10	0:03
7	12:13	0:42	12:55	0:03
8	12:58	0:50	1:48	0:03
9	1:51	0:42	2:35	0:03

Half Day				
	Start	Length	End	Transition
1	7:35	0:30	8:10	0:03
2	8:08	0:28	8:36	0:03
3	8:39	0:29	9:08	0:03
4	9:11	0:30	9:41	0:03
5	9:44	0:30	10:14	0:03
6	10:17	0:30	10:47	0:03
7	10:50	11:20	11:20	0:03

2-Hour Delay				
	Start	Length	End	Transition
1	9:35	0:31	10:06	0:03
2	10:09	0:31	10:40	0:03
3	10:43	0:31	11:14	0:03
4	11:17	0:30	11:47	0:03
5	11:50	0:31	12:21	0:03
6	12:24	0:30	12:54	0:03
7	12:57	0:30	1:27	0:03
8	1:30	0:31	2:01	0:03
9	2:04	0:31	2:35	0:03

Advisor/STAR				
	Start	Length	End	Transition
1	7:35	0:44	8:19	0:03
2	8:22	0:40	9:02	0:03
3	9:05	0:40	9:45	0:03
4	9:48	0:40	10:28	0:03
5	10:31	0:40	11:11	0:03
6	11:14	0:40	11:54	0:03
7	11:57	0:40	12:37	0:03
8	12:40	0:40	1:20	0:03
9	1:23	0:40	2:03	0:03
STAR	2:05	0:30	2:35	0:03

# Expectations and Policies



## SCHOOL HOURS

Buses will begin arriving at 7:15 a.m. All students should arrive at school by 7:35 a.m. If you are not riding the bus, parents and/or guardians must drop students off behind the middle school between 7:20 and 7:35 a.m. Students entering school after 7:35a.m. must sign in late in the main office and must submit a note from their parent/guardian explaining why they were late.

The school day ends at 2:35 p.m. Students will begin boarding their buses immediately following dismissal. Parents who pick up their children at or near the regular dismissal time **may not** park their cars nor wait in the bus loading zones. Please pull around behind the middle school and follow the pick up procedures.

### Absentee Call Off

If your child is not going to be in school on a given day, parents are asked to email our Attendance Clerk, Mrs. Rona Stewart (rstewart@westasd.org), or call the school absentee hotline as soon as possible on that day, preferably by 8:00 AM

724-695-1583

### Reminder!

Students must be in attendance by 8:00 AM to participate in athletic practices and competitions, musical programs, as well as ALL OTHER extracurricular activities. The only exception to the 8:00 arrival time is for a medical or dental appointment.

Students must have written verification on a printed form from the doctor/dentist office to participate.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS POLICY

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

6300 The Board believes that there is a strong correlation between regular school attendance and the academic achievement of students in the District.

The West Allegheny School District Attendance Policy was revised in June, 2020. Please review the policy in its entirety at the end of this handbook.



# PRIDE IN MYSELF, PRIDE IN MY SCHOOL

## INDIAN PRIDE PROGRAM

The Indian Pride Program is our School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) Program. This program teaches, reinforces, and recognizes the positive behaviors we expect from all our students and provides interventions and supports for students who are struggling to meet these expectations. Our students are expected to behave in a manner that is safe, responsible, and respectful in all areas in our school and on the bus. When students are observed following these expectations, they are awarded with Indian Pride tickets that are placed on display on our Indian Pride board. When the board is full, students have an opportunity to win prizes. Our Indian Pride Program currently focuses on promoting positive behavior in the hallways, cafeteria, classroom, at assemblies and on the bus. The Indian Pride Team of teachers and students is responsible for many fun activities and special events at WAMS including Pep Assemblies and Golden Ticket Week.

**Our Indian Pride Program theme is “Pride in myself, Pride in my school”.**

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

For the most current version of the West Allegheny School District Student Code of Conduct, please visit: [https://www.westasd.org/Downloads/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20\(Final%201\)%202021-2022.pdf](https://www.westasd.org/Downloads/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20(Final%201)%202021-2022.pdf)

### Lunch Detentions

Students may be assigned a Lunch Detention by a WAMS teacher or administrator for failing to meet minor behavioral expectations. Students and parents will be notified when the detention is assigned. Students are to report to the assigned Lunch Detention room for the entire lunch period. Lunch Detention students will be last to go through the lunch line. Students displaying poor behavior during lunch detention will be assigned an After-School Detention.

### After-School Detention

Students may be assigned an After-School Detention for behavioral infractions by a WAMS teacher or administrator as outlined in our Student Code of Conduct. After-School Detention is served outside the school day from 2:35 to 3:15 p.m. Students and parents are notified of the detention and the assigned date. Failure to serve the first detention will result in the re-assignment of the detention. Failure to serve a second time may lead to the next level of consequence. Transportation home after detention is the responsibility of the student and the parent.

### In-School Suspension (ISS)

Students may be assigned an In-School Suspension for behavioral infractions as outlined in our Student Code of Conduct. Students serving In-School Suspension (ISS) are temporarily prohibited from attending regular classes and other school day events. Students serving an ISS will be assigned to the Independent Learning Center for the length of their suspension. All schoolwork must be completed in ISS and returned to the designated teacher upon return to regular classes.

Parents will be notified of an In-School Suspension. Students that arrive late to school for ISS will be required to make-up the time missed.

## **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**

Students may be assigned an Out-of-School Suspension for behavioral infractions as outlined in our Student Code of Conduct. Students serving Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS) are temporarily prohibited from attending school and other school events for the durations of the OSS. All missed schoolwork must be completed at home and returned to the designated teacher upon return to regular classes. Students are expected to access their classwork on Canvas for the duration of their suspension. Students will be allowed to make up quizzes, tests, papers, and/or major projects missed while serving OSS for full credit. Parents will be notified of an Out-Of-School Suspension and may be asked to take the student home.

### **REMEMBER:**

Students may not attend any school functions or athletic events, home or away if on suspension. **Students are not permitted on school grounds while serving an OSS.**

**\*\*Please refer to the Activity Restriction Guidelines in this handbook for information regarding attendance at school events for students that receive ISS and OSS.**

## **Independent Learning Center (ILC)**

The Independent Learning Center allows students to learn in a safe, calm environment. The purpose of the ILC is to provide a short-term, educational option for students who need to make up work due to an extended absence or may need additional support due to other health related circumstances or academic support. These students are temporarily removed from their regular classes by the building principal or designee and placed in the ILC.

## **DRESS CODE**

A student's manner of dress, appearance and hairstyle is the basic responsibility of the student and their parents. However, it is the responsibility of the school to stress decency, cleanliness and appropriateness of dress for school as a protection to all students within the school district.

As a means towards addressing that goal, the following guidelines are to be followed:

### **Dress Not Permitted:**

- Clothing with words, symbols, or pictures that are sexually suggestive, and/or encourage drugs, alcohol, violence or gangs
- Wearing of hats, sun visors, sunglasses or coats during school hours (hoodies are acceptable)
- Bandannas, sweatbands, headbands with scarves attached
- Sagging clothing that show undergarments
- Long pants that go below shoes that could cause tripping or unsafe conditions
- Short skirts, short dresses and/or short shorts (these items must be at least fingertip length)
- Wallet chains, dog collars, heavy linked chains around neck, spiked and/or studded necklaces or bracelets



- Clothing with excessive rips/holes, holes above fingertip length
- Halter-tops, midriffs, tube tops, see-through tops, one shoulder shirts
- Shirts with thin or spaghetti straps that do not cover undergarments and/or not at least 2" wide.
- Shirts that expose the stomach and/or any back areas below shoulder blades

Any clothing and/or accessories deemed inappropriate and/or disruptive to the education process will not be permitted and will be addressed on an individual basis.

\* All students are required to have ID badges with them at all times. They must be shown and used in the cafeteria and library. (New IDs may be purchased in the main office for \$5.00.)

We believe that students in the West Allegheny School District possess the ability to practice good judgement and grooming. Students are encouraged to select shoes with safety in mind. In accordance with our district's mission statement, we hope we are inspiring responsible young adults and citizens. As a result, they hopefully will realize their collective appearance should reflect with pride and honor on the public image of the West Allegheny School District.

**Please Note** – Students will be given the opportunity to correct the situation with warnings. Continual violation of the dress code will result in consequences, which will follow the Student Code of Conduct.

## HEALTH GUIDELINES

1. All parents must have on file at the school, their home telephone number, cell phone number, and their business telephone number as well as an adult's alternate telephone number. Also, please list your doctor's phone number and hospital preference. Emergency forms must be turned in prior to students receiving their schedules.



2. At the beginning of each school year, parents should notify the school nurse if their child has any medical problem of which school personnel should be aware.

3. It is advisable to keep a student home from school if he/she has an above normal (98.6) temperature.

4. Medical and dental exams are required for all students. At the middle school, the following exams are administered as required by Pennsylvania School Health Law:

Annually - Vision, Height, Weight

Grade 6 - Medical Exam

Grade 7 - Dental and Hearing Exams

5. **No medication will be administered in school except by the direct order of a physician.** If medication is essential to the daily function of the child:

a. The school must have a written order from the doctor giving the date, student's name, diagnosis, name of medication, dosage, time schedule, possible side effects and any curtailment of specific school activities.

b. Medication must be brought to school in properly labeled containers indicating the student's name, name of physician, date of prescription, name and phone number of

pharmacy, name of medication, dosage and frequency of administration.

c. The school must have on file written permission from the parent for the administration of the medication.

6. Any medication found on a student without the above notices will not be given to the child.

7. Any child falling and bumping his/her head may be taken home by the parent/guardian for observation and/or necessary action.

8. Only injuries occurring on school property during school hours will be given first aid. Injuries occurring elsewhere must be taken care of by the parents/guardians.

9. Any child who has been excluded or who has been absent from school for having pink eye, impetigo, pediculosis (lice), ringworm or any contagious disease may be required to provide a recovery note from a physician. Periodic checks may be made for the above conditions.

10. Parents/guardians or their designees are responsible for picking up their children when they are sick or injured at school.

11. Serious emergency cases will be handled:

a. Emergency transportation will be made to a medical care facility.

b. Parents/guardians will be contacted.

## **DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY**

### **6640 DRUGS, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

The possession and use of drugs, controlled substances and alcoholic beverages are forbidden in the District. This includes the school buildings, the school grounds, the school buses and any and all activities under the control or direction of school personnel whether they occur on or off school property. Violation of these restrictions will result in disciplinary measures being taken against offenders. The Administration of the District also reserves the right to prefer civil charges against any and all offenders, and to refer those offenders to law enforcement authorities for appropriate action.

#### **Possession of Drugs or Alcohol**



If a student is found in possession of a drug, inhalant, or alcohol, the parent(s)/guardian(s) are contacted, the situation described and a conference arranged immediately. Students who violate the Drug and Alcohol Policy will be required to have an assessment by the school's drug and alcohol counselor or an appropriate rehabilitation facility. The student and his/her parents must meet with the Student Support Team before the student is readmitted to school.

## **SEARCHES**

### **6850 SEARCH POLICY**

A search of school property shall be conducted at any time school administrators have reasonable suspicion to believe that items are stored therein which constitute a crime or violation.

Generalized and random locker and vehicle searches (including canine sniff searches) are authorized and may be made without notice and require no particular individualized suspicion. Canine searches will be instituted beginning the 2011-12 school year. If a drug sniffing dog reacts to the purported presence of an illegal substance, such reaction shall constitute reasonable individualized suspicion so as to permit a search of the individual's locker or vehicle. Drug sniffing

dogs will not be used to search a student's individual person. The full canine search policy can be found on page 52 of this handbook.

## **WEAPONS POLICY**

Possession of a weapon by any person is prohibited in any West Allegheny School District building, or on any grounds of the West Allegheny School District, by a student on his/her way to or from school, in any vehicle providing authorized transportation of students to or from any West Allegheny School District building or any district sponsored function, activity or event and at any school function, activity or event whether or not held on West Allegheny School District property.

"Weapon" shall mean any instrument or implement for the infliction of or capable of inflicting bodily injury which serves no common lawful purpose, including but not limited to, any knife, razor, razor blade, or other cutting instrument or cutting tool, sharpened wood, sharpened metal, nun-chuck stick or other martial arts device, brass or metal knuckles, club, metal pipe, blackjack, chemical agent such as acid, mace, tazer, shocker or stun gun, any explosive device, firearm (including pellet guns and B.B. guns), gun, bullet, slingshot, bow, arrow or any other similar device from which a projectile may be discharged, including a firearm or other weapon which is not loaded or which lacks a component or device necessary to render it immediately operable. The term "weapon" shall include "weapon look alike," including any instrument or implement designed to look like a weapon or a facsimile of a weapon such as a toy gun or water pistol.

"Possess" and "possession" shall mean being on the person or in a person's car, locker or otherwise under his or her control.

**INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES** - Anyone who has knowledge of a weapon being impermissible upon or in school property shall immediately inform the principal, who will immediately conduct an investigation. Persons having knowledge of a weapon being in or on school property or as prohibited above shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings if the person does not timely report same.

Upon reasonable suspicion that a student possesses a weapon, the principal will request that the student voluntarily empty his/her pockets and remove any coat, book bag or purse so the same may be searched by a school official. Such search shall take place in the presence of another adult. It is noted that the State Board of Education Regulations provide that reasonable force may be used by teachers and school authorities to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects.

**ACTION** - A student who violates this policy or assists in the violation of this policy will be subject to one or more of the following actions depending upon the specific violation and intent: warning and/or in-school suspension, suspension from school for up to ten days, a mandatory hearing before the Board of School Directors, permanent expulsion.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

West Allegheny maintains a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, both sexual harassment and bullying. Such conduct can interfere with a student's academic performance and social-emotional development. It is the policy of the West Allegheny School District to maintain the learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. No student or staff member of the District shall be subjected to sexual harassment.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the District staff to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below:

**DEFINITION:** Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any member of the school staff to a student, when made by any member of the school staff to another staff member, or when made by any student to another student when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or when
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or when
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment or education environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined, may include but is not limited to the following: verbal harassment or abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person, with sexual or demeaning implication; unwelcomed touching; suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.

### **PROCEDURE**

1. Any student who alleges sexual harassment by any staff member or student in the District may use the District's complaint form or may complain directly to the building principal, guidance counselor or other individual designated to receive such complaints. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grade or work assignments.
2. Teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, and other employees are required to notify administration of all allegations or reports of sexual harassment.
3. School administrators must notify the Superintendent of every allegation or report.
4. Any complaint from a student or staff member concerning sexual harassment of a student by either an employee or another student should be thoroughly investigated by the building principal or assistant principal.
5. Complaints involving student-to-student sexual harassment which are lodged at the classroom or building level may be resolved informally. If an informal resolution satisfactory to the complainant and/or complainant's parents is reached, no further investigation or action by the District is required. If the problem cannot be informally resolved, it should be further investigated by the building principal.
6. Student interviews should be conducted in an environment which is least intimidating and most likely to elicit truthfulness and full disclosure. Parents should be notified of this interview and their rights to attend it. Subsequent to the interview, the student's complaint should be recorded by the interviewer and then given to the student to be signed and acknowledged.
7. If the Principal or Assistant Principal is the person accused, the Superintendent or a designee will conduct the investigation.
8. Employee interviews should be conducted after notice of the nature of the inquiry and the right to representation by the union and/or counsel has been made.
9. If it is appropriate, the police or district solicitor should be involved.

10. If an alleged complaint is found to be true, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. If the complaint is against a staff member, such discipline may range from a letter or warning to discharge. If the complaint is against another student in the school district, disciplinary action may range from suspension to expulsion.

11. The right of confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the District's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

12. Given the nature of the type of discrimination, the District also recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on innocent people. Therefore, false accusations will result in the same severe disciplinary action applicable to one found guilty of sexual harassment.



## **SMOKING POLICY**

### **6650 SMOKING POLICY**

The Board believes that the use of tobacco and tobacco related products, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, presents a health and safety hazard, which can have serious consequences for the smoker and non-smoker and the safety of the school district. The Board recognizes the health dangers from the use of tobacco, and wishes to protect students, employees, visitors and guests from an environment that may be harmful to them.

#### **6650.1 TOBACCO USE PROHIBITED**

A. All persons, including employees, officers, volunteer, visitors and students are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco products of any kind, using look-alike products, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, and smoking cessation devices and the use of smokeless tobacco products in any school building utilized for children within the School District, and on any school bus or other vehicle used in transporting children operated by or on behalf of the West Allegheny School District. This prohibition shall be enforced at all times and shall include any activity or function occurring within the facility, whether school sponsored or otherwise.

B. Smoking, using tobacco products of any kind, using look-a-like products including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, look-a-like smoking cessation devices and or the use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited on exterior school grounds of any school building utilized for children.

C. Smoking, using tobacco products of any kind, using look-alike products including but not limited to electronic cigarettes and look-alike smoking cessation devices, and the use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in all other indoor school buildings, facilities and exterior school grounds, including but not limited to, any outdoor fixed seating area and concession stands.

D. There shall be no designated smoking areas located in any building, facility or on school grounds.

#### **6650.2 STUDENT POSSESSION OR USE PROHIBITED**

A. Any student is prohibited from possessing or using tobacco and tobacco related products, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, as described below:

1. In any West Allegheny School District building;
2. On any grounds of the West Allegheny School District;

3. On any school property owned by, leased by or under the control of the West Allegheny School District;
  4. On a school bus or any other conveyance provided by the School District for transportation to or from West Allegheny School District, including transportation to or from a school-sponsored activity, function or event. This includes private vehicles utilized by school staff or chaperons for transporting students.
  5. At any school function, activity, or event held off School District grounds or property.
- B.** A student is in possession of tobacco, for purposes of this policy, if tobacco or any tobacco related products, and/or electronic cigarettes are found on the person of the student, in the student's locker, in a student's purse, backpack, gym bag or other like object, in a student's coat or other clothing, or otherwise under the student's control.

#### **6650. PURPOSE**

This Tobacco Policy is implemented for the following reasons:

- A. This policy will further the goal of consistency among on-going School District programs directed against smoking;
- B. This policy will be part of a necessary regulatory scheme for students in the public schools;
- C. This policy will provide the role-modeling efforts of professional and nonprofessional staff to direct children against smoking;
- D. This policy, by virtue of its application to school district employees and members of the public, in conjunction with the policy not permitting students to smoke or use tobacco, will generate respect among students for school authority, thereby improving discipline;
- E. This policy will reflect and emphasize the hazards of smoking.

#### **6650.4 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW**

- A. Congress has adopted the "Pro-Children Act of 1994" (20 U.S.C.S. 6081, et seq.), which requires that public school districts prohibit smoking within any indoor facility wherein routine or regular educational services to children is being provided.
- B. The Pennsylvania Legislature has adopted a School Tobacco Control Law, Act 168 of 1998, which provides that a Board of School Directors may prohibit smoking on school property and otherwise regulate smoking.
- C. The Pennsylvania Legislature has adopted Act 145 of 1996, which permits school authorities to prosecute students for possession or use of tobacco.

#### **6650.5 DEFINITIONS**

- A. Tobacco use is defined as the use or possession of any tobacco products including a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other lighted smoking equipment, including electronic cigarettes, and shall also include the use of any smokeless tobacco products.
- B. "Smokeless tobacco product" shall include, but not be limited to, any chewing tobacco, snuff, or similar smokeless tobacco product that is used, chewed, sniffed or ingested.
- C. "School building utilized for children" is any indoor facility used by the West Allegheny School District for provisions of routine or regular kindergarten, elementary or secondary education, or library services to children.
- D. "Tobacco use" is a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other tobacco product and smokeless tobacco in any form including all tobacco products of any kind, look-a-like products

including electronic cigarettes and smoking look-alike cessation devices.

E. “Children” means individuals who have not attained the age of 18.

F. “Student” or “Pupil” is a person between the ages of 6 and 21 years who is enrolled in school.

## **6650.6 PENALTIES**

Any person who violates this policy may be subject to the following penalties, which are in addition to any civil or criminal prosecution and penalty imposed by law:

### **A. STUDENTS**

Students will be subject to penalties prescribed in the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including possible expulsion. Any student who violates this Policy may be subject to prosecution before a district justice (magistrate) and be fined up to not more than \$50.00 plus court costs, pursuant to Act 145 of 1996.

Agencies or organizations renting or otherwise using District facilities are held responsible for compliance with this Policy. Failure to comply may result in the District’s refusal to permit the organization or agency future use of the facility.

In addition to the above stated penalties, any person who violates this policy by smoking in any school building in violation of any local fire code or ordinance may be subject to prosecution before a district justice in accordance with said fire code or ordinance.

## **6650.7 STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Students may be referred and encouraged to participate in smoking cessation programs through the employee or student assistance programs as appropriate.

A. The provisions of this policy apply to all individuals or organizations using school facilities. Violations of this policy will be taken into consideration in determining if future requests of facilities use should be granted.

B. When appropriate, students shall be referred and encouraged to participation in a smoking cessation program through the student assistance program as may be appropriate.



## **VISITORS**

During the 2016 - 2017 school year, the West Allegheny School District launched the use of the Raptor Visitor Management System. The use of the system is intended to maximize operational efficiency, which aligns with Priority 3 of our Framework for Excellence: Financial Responsibility and Operational Efficiency, *Ensure Effectiveness of Crisis-Safety Response and Emergency Operations Plan*. Raptor verifies the identity of visitors, checks their status against national and local databases, and issues photo identification. These precautions are yet another layer used to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

When entering a District school/office, all visitors must present a valid state- or government-issued ID, which will be scanned into the Raptor system. Upon reading the information, Raptor will check the national database to identify sex offenders and a District database for individuals involved in Protection from Abuse (PFA) and custody orders. It is important to note that the Raptor System only scans the visitor’s name, date of birth and photo that additional visitor data from the driver’s license is not gathered nor is the system connected to any other system such as the Department

of Motor Vehicles. Therefore, any other information connected to the visitor's driver's license is not accessible to any of the users. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor and includes a photo, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. This photo ID should be visible throughout the visit and should be returned to the office when the visitor leaves. In the event that a positive match occurs, building and district administration will be notified via the Raptor System.

Due to school safety, student visitors from other schools or West Allegheny graduates are NOT PERMITTED.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Internet users are expected to access the Internet and World Wide Web as an educational resource. The Internet and World Wide Web are available in the district as a resource to promote and enhance the educational experience. All District technology resources including the Internet, World Wide Web resources, and approved personal electronic devices for student use must be used appropriately and explicitly for educational purposes only.

Specific networking guidelines, prohibitions, and benefits are explicitly described in the district's Technology Acceptable Use Policy. This policy can be read in its entirety at the district's school board information policy/procedures/ law website:

**[www.westasd.org/PoliciesProceduresLaws.aspx](http://www.westasd.org/PoliciesProceduresLaws.aspx)**

However, because of the length and abundance of technical terms throughout the policy, we have outlined the key points for your convenience. First of all, students are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with district policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses are prohibited:

1. Unlawful activity.
2. Commercial or for-profit purposes.
3. Non-work or non-school related work.
4. Product advertisement or political lobbying.
5. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks and offensive or inflammatory communication.
6. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials.
7. Access to obscene or pornographic material or child pornography.
8. Inappropriate language or profanity.
9. Transmission of material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
10. Intentionally obtaining or modifying files, passwords and data belonging to other users.
11. Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms.
12. Fraudulent copying, communications, or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.
13. Loading or using of unauthorized games, programs, files or other electronic media.
14. Disruption of the work of others.
15. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software and files (i.e. backup).
16. Quoting of personal communications in a public forum without the original author's prior consent.
17. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
18. Unsupervised Chat rooms.



As a district, we have implemented several safety measures to protect you when using the Internet and World Wide Web. For example, any District computer/server utilized by students and staff shall be equipped with a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to materials that are obscene, child pornographic, or harmful to minors (harmful terms are defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act - CIPA). Additionally, a district employee will always be supervising students while accessing the Internet or World Wide Web.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE**

- a. The network user shall be responsible for damages to equipment systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.
- b. Illegal use of technology resources, the network or approved personal electronic devices; intentional deletion or damage to files or data belonging to others; copyright violations; and theft of services may be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.
- c. Loss of access and other disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or expulsion from school shall be consequences for inappropriate use.
- d. Vandalism will result in cancellation of access privileges. Vandalism is defined as any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet or other networks; this includes but is not limited to uploading or creating computer viruses.
- e. Violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action pursuant to due process procedures established by Board Policy, state and federal law, and/or collective bargaining agreements.

### **CONCLUSION**

The West Allegheny School District and the District Computer Program Coordinator recognize that our users have a wide range of needs and requirements. To this end, we depend on and request that our users practice considerate and responsible computing and adhere to common sense standards. When problems arise, they will be dealt with to insure the unimpaired operation of our systems and network, but we request that all users try to be considerate and prudent in their use of the resources.

## **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

### **6270 – TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**



This policy is intended to create guidelines on students' possession and use of various electronic devices while on school property, school buses or vehicles or at school-sponsored activities and events.

The Board supports use of the Internet and other computer networks in West Allegheny School District's instructional and operational programs to facilitate learning, teaching and daily operations through interpersonal communications and access to information, research and collaboration.

The Board also recognizes the value of permitting staff and students to use approved personal electronic devices in the school setting to support educational goals and objectives. Furthermore, the Board recognizes that the presence, use and/or misuse of personal electronic devices may disrupt the educational environment.

Personal electronic devices shall include all personally owned devices capable of taking photographs, recording audio or video data, storing, transmitting, or receiving messages or images, or providing wired or wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet.

**At WAMS, all personal electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, iPads, tablets, and e-readers must be kept in lockers at all times. Personal electronic devices may be used in class at the discretion of the teacher only. Earbuds are to be worn in the classrooms only, at the discretion of the teacher. West Allegheny is not responsible for any loss or damage to PED's brought to school.**

**Improper use and/or unauthorized possession of personal electronic devices will result in the following consequences:**

**First offense:** Warning, device must be returned to locker.

**Second offense:** The device will be confiscated and must be picked up by the parent or guardian.

**Third offense:** In-school suspension issued, and the device must be picked up by the parent or guardian.

## **CHROMEBOOKS**

All students will receive a district issued Chromebook to use for the school year. Students are responsible for the proper use and care of the device. The Chromebook should remain free of stickers or other decorative accents. Students are expected to bring their fully charged Chromebook to school each day. If your child brings their charger to school, please be sure to label it with their name. Device insurance is available to purchase. Please contact the office if you are interested.

If there is a malfunction or damage to the Chromebook, please have your child stop in the office to have it checked. You can also email tech support at:

[wahelpdesk@westasd.org](mailto:wahelpdesk@westasd.org)

## **GRADING**

Developing meaningful, fair grading practices is a universal goal for teachers and administrators. The establishment of guidelines serves as a foundation for enhancing sound decision making regarding grading procedures among teachers. Guided by professional literature and student/parent/teacher/administrative collaboration, this policy, along with supporting guidelines, is intended to identify the guiding principles of the West Allegheny School District grading and reporting system in order to promote district-wide, consistent implementation.

When viewing your child's progress through Skyward, the quarterly grades will be weighted in math, science, and social studies in the same manner. Grades in ELA will be weighted differently. Please refer to the Middle School Program of Studies for more detailed information. In math, science, and social studies, homework and any assignment that is graded for completion will make up 15% of the final grade. Assignments and assessments that are graded for accuracy will make up 85% of the final grade. Advanced courses, including Algebra I, Geometry, Spanish, and German, are weighted. A student earning an A in these courses will receive 4.5 quality points, B's earn 3.5 quality points, C's earn 2.5 quality points, and D's earn 1 quality point. These calculations will be done automatically for you through the Skyward program.

## Grading Scale and Procedures

Percentages	Grade	Regular Courses	Weighted Courses*
90 – 100	A	4.0	4.5
80 – 89	B	3.0	3.5
70 – 79	C	2.0	2.5
60 – 69	D	1.0	1.0
0 - 59	F	0	0

\*The weighted courses include Algebra, Geometry, Spanish I and German I.

### Lowest Percentage For F Grades:

If a student earns less than 50% on any graded assignment that he or she attempted to complete, the grade entered into the grade book should be rounded up to 50%. The rationale for this practice is guided by the fact that other letter grades — A, B, C and D — are broken down in increments of 10 from 60 to 100, but there is a 59-point spread between 59% and 0, a gap that can often make it mathematically impossible for some failing students to ever catch up. The adjustment to 50% is intended to encourage student performance, increase motivation and to give students the opportunity to experience success.

### Determination of Final Grades:

The four (4) nine-week grades shall be averaged into the student's final grade. Each quarter is weighted equally. Constancy in grading procedures is key to success across all grade levels. This also promotes CONSISTENCY for teachers, students, and parents at each grade level. The final grade for a student will be determined using one of two methods, quality points or percentages. Examples are provided below.

When using quality points to determine a final grade, the following scale will be used:

A = 3.51 – 4.0

B = 2.51 – 3.49

C = 1.51 – 2.49

D = .51 – 1.49

F = 0 - .49

\*(When quality points are averaged to 0.5, 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5, total points will be used as a tiebreaker.)

### EXAMPLES of QUALITY POINTS

The FINAL grade for a student will be an average based on a letter grade point system. Grades – not percentages – are what determine a final grade for a student.

Example 1:

1 <sup>ST</sup> Q	A	4	1 <sup>ST</sup> Q	B	3	1 <sup>ST</sup> Q	A	4
2 <sup>ND</sup> Q	C	2	2 <sup>ND</sup> Q	B	3	2 <sup>ND</sup> Q	B	3
3 <sup>RD</sup> Q	B	3	3 <sup>RD</sup> Q	C	2	3 <sup>RD</sup> Q	A	4
4 <sup>TH</sup> Q	A	4	4 <sup>TH</sup> Q	B	3	4 <sup>TH</sup> Q	B	3
FINAL		13/4= 3.25 B	FINAL		11/4= 2.75 B	FINAL		14/4=3 .5 **

Example 2:

Example 3:

\*\* (This example is between a B and C. Teachers must use total points for the year to decide the grade. This method should be used if calculations are at .50, 1.50, 2.50 and 3.50.)

### EXAMPLES of PERCENTAGES

When determining the average, teachers should round according to the rules of mathematics unless at 59.5%, 69.5%, 79.5% or 89.5%. Then total points are to be used as a tiebreaker.

1 <sup>ST</sup> Q	93%	A
2 <sup>ND</sup> Q	84%	B
3 <sup>RD</sup> Q	92%	A
4 <sup>TH</sup> Q	86%	B
FINAL	355/4	88.75% B

1 <sup>ST</sup> Q	83%	B
2 <sup>ND</sup> Q	76%	C
3 <sup>RD</sup> Q	77%	C
4 <sup>TH</sup> Q	82%	B
FINAL	318/4	79.5% **

\*\* Examine total points to determine final grade

Students with three (3) F's will fail automatically unless the following condition is met: The teacher, upon reviewing the student's total year performance believes that the student in question has met the MINIMUM criteria for passing and the principal, upon reviewing each individual case, authorizes the passing grade.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Students receive Report Cards every nine weeks. At the mid-point of each grading period, Progress Reports are posted to Skyward. Parents may also check their child's progress via Skyward at any time.

## EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit has to be related to the curriculum and should provide meaningful academic enrichment opportunities. Students should not be penalized if they cannot make evening or weekend activities; they should be given an alternative assignment to count toward extra credit. If parents are to sign a student test for extra credit points, students are to correct test mistakes. If a teacher chooses to use extra credit, it should be limited to raising the 9 week average to no more than 3%. A final 9 week grade cannot exceed 100%.

## HONOR ROLL

Highest Honors - 4.0 and higher

High Honors - 3.5 - 3.9

Honors - 3.0 - 3.4

Students who maintain honor roll status will be awarded special recognition during an awards assembly and/or Honor's Night at the end of the school year.

Under academic achievement, the Board Policy states "people have diverse capabilities and interests and individual patterns of growth and learning." Thus, adaptations for instruction that addresses individual learning difficulties of students are to be in evidence.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of learning and should reflect student needs, capabilities, and/or interests.

Homework provides opportunities for students to prepare for, practice, apply, integrate, enrich, and extend school learning; to reinforce work-study skills; to effectively use school/community resources; and to develop self-discipline.



Teachers assess homework according to district guidelines. Students are responsible for completing assignments according to the teacher's established criteria. Parents/ guardians are responsible for providing the work area, time, and conditions necessary for the student to successfully complete homework assignments.

The administration recommends that homework not be used as a grade to determine proficiency of the completed assignment, but rather as a grade to assess whether the student has completed or not completed the assignment. Additionally, the administration recommends that homework be used as an effective, positive reinforcement technique.

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION GUIDELINES

Grade level retention should be thought of as the intervention of last resort. An informed decision-making process considering the individual circumstances of each student must be established. It is important to try a wide range of interventions and services before retention is considered. Adaptations should accommodate the learning style, developmental level, and cognitive ability of each learner. It is equally important to accurately record the level of success achieved with each

intervention program and strategy utilized. Making the correct retention decision is the first step toward helping at-risk students. Specific criteria for middle school retention recommendations are listed below.

A student will be required to attend summer school and earn a passing grade or be retained if he/she fails English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science and Social Studies. Summer school sessions are available through the West Allegheny Virtual Academy. Parents may choose to have required course work completed at their expense in an approved, non-district sponsored program. Prior to enrolling in a non-district sponsored program for credit/course recovery, please seek approval of courses from the WAMS Guidance Office. Students who have already failed one year will be re-evaluated by the school principal in terms of maturation, his/her reading and math scores, his/her potential abilities and other pertinent factors that may result in a social promotion.

## HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

### 5430

Homebound education is defined as carrying the public school program into the home through the visiting teacher. The primary purpose of the program is to help the physically handicapped child and those students with extended absences due to illness or injury to maintain the continuity of their class work.

#### 5430.1

Students who are absent from school for an extended period of time may receive homebound instruction if the attending physician and the parent/guardian request in writing this service.

#### 5430.2

Hours of instruction will be determined by the Administration and staff.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The West Allegheny Middle School is committed to encouraging strict standards of academic integrity and committed to helping students develop intellectually, creatively, and ethically. Academic integrity is a shared partnership between administrators, teachers, students, and parents to ensure that the standard of academic honesty leads to higher levels of performance by providing challenging critical thinking opportunities. Therefore, any kind of academic fraud such as cheating, plagiarism, helping others to cheat or participating in academic misconduct is prohibited. Those students who violate the school's standard for academic integrity will be subject to the following consequences if concurrent within the calendar school year:

**First Offense in any subject area:** a zero on the assignment with the possibility for partial recovery not to exceed 50% of the assignment provided the student meets the expectations of the teacher. Parent contact made by teacher. Teacher notifies administration (Level I within the Student Code of Conduct).

**Second Offense in any subject area:** a zero on the assignment with no point value recovery and a discipline referral (Level II within the Student Code of Conduct) to the administration. Parent contact made by teacher and administration.

**Third Offense in any subject area:** a zero on the assignment, a discipline referral (Level II within the Student Code of Conduct) to the administration, and a failing grade for the nine weeks in the class where the third offense took place. Parent contact made by teacher and administration.



It is the responsibility of all students to maintain academic integrity with regard to class assignments, tests, and any other graded course requirements. Thus, cheating, plagiarism, and/or knowingly assisting another student to violate academic integrity are all violations of the above mentioned.

## **ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES ELIGIBILITY POLICY HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY**

1. The initial student roster for each extra-curricular sport/arts area shall be submitted to the high school guidance office or middle school main office before rosters are announced and the practices/rehearsals begin for that 'season' to verify that each student is academically eligible to begin participation if selected.
2. An accurate student roster for each area shall be included on the weekly eligibility list provided to all teachers.
3. Students who are home-schooled or cyber- schooled, attend Parkway Vo-Tech, or are placed in a private school shall provide weekly documentation verifying eligibility.

### **GRADES**

**STEP 1:** A student on the weekly eligibility list who has an 'F' grade reported for any subject shall be formally informed with a 'warning' and shall have one week to bring it up to 'passing', defined as a 'D' or higher. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously. **Students are required to attend mandatory study hall starting with the first week on the eligibility list.**

**STEP 2:** If the student appears on the eligibility list for two consecutive weeks in a row in the same subject there will be an extra week added on for the first week status. Consecutive appearances on the list in the same subject will be for one week only-no warning week extension. Mandatory study hall is required.

**STEP 3:** If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a second 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from competing/performing but shall be permitted to practice. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously.

**STEP 4:** If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a third 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from both practicing/rehearsing and competing/performing. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously.

**STEP 5:** If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a fourth 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from participating for the balance of that team/activity/organization's season. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously followed by written confirmation from the principal.

This five-step sequence shall be applied to each initial 'F' grade reported. A student who receives an 'F' grade as the final grade for a course at the end of second semester shall be placed on 'STEP 2' until completing a week of school in session without an 'F' grade reported for any another course.

An 'F' grade shall be cumulative for each subject for each season. A student receiving a second 'F' grade in the same subject at any subsequent point during that season shall be placed on the next step which the last 'F' grade was raised to eligible status.

## ATTENDANCE

The existing high school and middle school attendance policies shall apply.

A student that has been absent for **20** or more days in a given semester shall be ineligible to participate until he/she has attended school for a total of **45** days documented from the first day in attendance in the subsequent semester. Four (4) unexcused tardies shall be the equivalent of one unexcused absence. This policy also applies from the second semester to the next year's first semester. Days spent on 'out of school' suspensions are counted as 'absent'. (Based on PIAA policy applied at WA to all extra-curricular athletic, arts or other activities and organizations.)

## INTERVENTION

Each student shall continue to be informed of and have access to the existing Academic Time-Out policy.

Students who have received a second and third notification concerning an 'F' grade in a given subject shall be required to attend a study session each day, Monday through Thursday, from 2:35-3:30 p.m. staffed by a District employee. Students may be released for verified tutoring with another teacher. **Students are required to attend mandatory study hall starting with the first week on the eligibility list.**

Students with an unexcused absence from a study session must attend a make-up study session the next week. Eligibility status shall not be restored until all missed sessions are made up, even if the 'F' grade itself has been raised.

Each head coach/director shall be responsible to assist in monitoring the academic progress of their students. Final eligibility status shall be determined by the building principal in conjunction with Athletic Director and Fine Arts Coordinator.

### Reminder!

Students must be in attendance by 8:00 AM to participate in athletic practices and competitions, musical programs, as well as ALL OTHER extracurricular activities. The only exception to the 8:00 arrival time is for a medical or dental appointment. Students must have written verification on a printed form from the doctor/dentist office to participate. Students are not permitted to leave early without prior permission from an administrator or they will not be permitted to return for practice, competitions, musical programs or other extracurricular activities.



## ACTIVITY RESTRICTION

The principal(s) and/or designee may place a student on activity restriction for period of time up to a full school year as a result of failing academic performance, misbehavior on or off school premises, or a poor pattern of attendance. A student placed on activity restriction shall be excluded from participating in or attending activities beyond the regular school day and/or when school rules apply, including, but not limited to, athletic contests, art performances,



school-sponsored dances, and school sponsored non-curricular activities or field trips such as team reward activities/trips.

Any student who commits a Level III or IV violation, as described in the West Allegheny School District Student Code of Conduct, resulting in charges filed with local law enforcement will be placed on activity restriction for up to a school year.

In addition, any student who has been absent more than 10% of school days may be placed on activity restriction. Periodic attendance reviews will occur throughout the school year at times determined by the administration. Also, students who have Level II, III, or IV code of conduct violations resulting in consequences of in-school or out-of-school suspension may be placed on activity restriction.

Restriction reductions will be considered upon written request to the middle school administration from the student. Reductions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and not within the first 30 days. Reduction reviews may only occur in 30-day increments and will consist of a review of the student's discipline, attendance, and academic records, as well as any other factors as determined by the administration.



## BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students **MUST** understand that the bus driver has the authority to maintain order on the bus. Students are reminded that it is a privilege to ride the bus. The school district is not required to provide transportation. Students are only permitted to ride their assigned bus to and from school.

\*Students are governed by the rules and regulations as set forth by the West Allegheny School Board. Please refer to the Transportation Handbook at the end of this student handbook.

## PICKING STUDENTS UP FROM SCHOOL

Parents must use the pick-up/drop-off student loop behind the middle school. No student is permitted to go home with anyone other than their parents without a note and approval from the office. Fire lanes are in front of the Middle School and cannot be used for parking. **NOTE:** Students are not allowed to walk to or from school. Permission for emergency circumstances may be granted with prior approval from the principal.

## ID BADGES

Students must have their ID badges every day. They must be visible and kept in good condition. ID badges are used in the library and in the cafeteria when purchasing lunch. Students must pay for lost or damaged ID badges. They are available in the main office for \$5.00.

## LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker for the 2022-2023 school year. Lockers are the property of WAMS and are on loan to the student; therefore, administration will have the right to search them as stated by board policy. Lockers are to be kept clean and orderly. **Students are to only use the locker assigned to them.** Combinations should be kept private; the office will have the

combination in case it is forgotten. Backpacks, coats, and cell phones must be kept in student lockers. **The school is NOT responsible for lost or stolen items.**

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

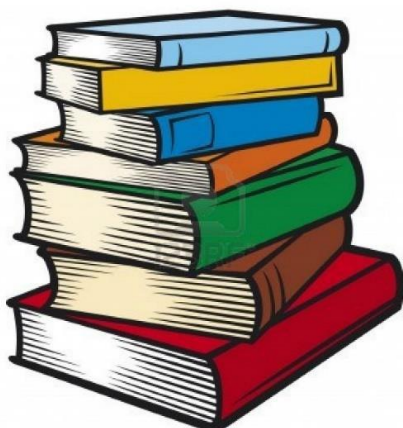
All students are required to participate in physical education classes. If a student has an illness or injury that prohibits them from participating in physical education classes for an extended period of time, a doctor's excuse must be submitted to the office. This excuse should tell the nature of injury or illness and the length of time needed to be excused from physical education classes. The office will forward this information to the physical education teacher.

## LIBRARY

The middle school maintains a library and has a certified librarian on staff.

The library is fully computerized with access to a network of other libraries' collections, online databases and a fully computerized card catalog.

Book Week and Library Week activities provide opportunities for students to purchase books and reading-related materials as well as participate in age- appropriate activities which enhance their reading skills and interests.



\* All materials must be returned to the proper place at the end of the class period. **NO STEALING OR DESTROYING OF LIBRARY MATERIALS.**

\* Library passes for STAR periods must be obtained from the librarian prior to the student going to homeroom in the mornings. A library pass must be signed by a teacher. **FORGING OF A TEACHER'S SIGNATURE IS PROHIBITED.**

\* Students must have their school ID to check out books from the library.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students are held responsible for materials that the school loans to them. If lost, they must be replaced. These materials include Chromebooks, textbooks, calculators, and all books or materials borrowed from the library. Students will not be permitted to attend end of the year field trips until items are returned or paid for. Report cards will be withheld until all debts are paid. A limited number of student assignment agendas are available. Please contact the main office.

## TEXTBOOKS

Should it be necessary to have a textbook rebound due to wear and tear of the school year, the student will be charged a fee. All books should be covered and cared for. Students will be required to pay replacement cost for lost or severely damaged books.

## E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Administration and teachers can be reached through the school e-mail network by addressing the e-mail to: first initial last name of the person@westasd.org. Please feel free to use this e-mail service to keep good communication between home and school. It is also requested that the use of the service be used appropriately.

## CANVAS

Canvas is the district wide Learning Management System. Each student has a Canvas account and each teacher maintains a Canvas page for their classes. Parents can link their own account to their child's account to view schedules, grades, and assignments. Students are encouraged to check Canvas daily to stay on top of assignments and tests. If your child is absent, they may access their work on Canvas.



## TELEPHONES

Use of the office telephone by students is for emergency and school business calls only. **Students are not permitted to use cell phones to make phone calls or to send or receive text messages during school hours.** If you must reach your child during school hours, please contact the main office at (724) 695-8979 for help in this matter.

## USE OF VENDING MACHINES

Vending machines are for after school use only. Anyone staying for activities after school may use these machines after 2:40, after all buses have left the premises.

## LOST AND FOUND

Students often lose their personal belongings. When found, the custodial department deposits these items in the cafeteria. Students who report an item lost should check this lost and found area first before reporting it to the office.

## CAFETERIA

Students are responsible for maintaining a clean cafeteria at all times. Students are required to clear their tables and properly dispose of all trash. Cooperation is required to maintain a clean and inviting dining hall. Positive behavior in the cafeteria is reinforced and rewarded through our Indian Pride Program.

So that everyone can enjoy lunch, certain rules must be followed:

1. Stay in line – do not cut in front of other students.
2. Do not throw food, paper, silverware, etc...
3. Be respectful of cafeteria staff and other students.
4. Stay at your assigned table.
5. Keep tables, chairs and floors clean.



Students violating cafeteria rules and regulations may be denied cafeteria privileges by serving Lunch Detention, After-School Detention, or by being suspended from the cafeteria/school.

Students must present their school ID to the cafeteria staff when purchasing items. Students who do not have their IDs will eat last. (New IDs may be purchased in the main office for \$5.00.)

## HALL PASSES

No student shall be in the hall during regular class time without a hall pass issued by the teacher in charge of the student during that time. This includes trips to the restroom, library, office, as well as any place other than the room to which the student has been assigned. Passage shall be by the shortest and quickest feasible route without stopovers at other points or without bothering other classes in session. All students must request a pass by asking their teacher for permission to leave and entering the request in E-Hallpass.

## RESTROOM PRIVILEGES

Restrooms are to be used only for the purpose intended. Any other usage such as loitering, purposeful meeting or hiding from school personnel will not be tolerated. Students will use only the restroom assigned to them by team or class on the floor where they are located. If using the restroom during a class, you are to use the following procedures:

1. Ask the teacher's permission.
2. Follow sign out procedure using E-Hallpass.
3. Take the restroom pass and leave.
4. Sign in upon return.

Keep your restrooms clean. Show good sense and respect for others who may wish to use the facility. Here are some rules to keep in mind:

1. Always flush after using all sanitary units.
2. Never place in a toilet anything that could clog it. Examples: paper towels or any type of cloth or hard substance.
3. Let's remember the people who must clean the restrooms.
4. Do not use toilet tissue as paper towels or paper towels as toilet tissue. If the dispensers are out of paper, please notify the office.

Remember, any restroom damage destroys your convenience. Report any damage you see to the office immediately.

**DO NOT ASSUME THAT A TEACHER MUST HONOR YOUR EVERY BATHROOM REQUEST. IN CASES WHERE A STUDENT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF USING THE RESTROOM, A REQUEST MAY BE DENIED.**

## FIRE / EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DRILLS

A successful emergency drill is governed by these few fundamental rules:

1. When the alarm is heard, the students are to follow teacher directives, move quickly and quietly without talking, running, or pushing to the designated area your instructor specifies. The teacher will lead the group and it is mandatory that students from each area stay as a group.
2. Gaps in drill lines are to be kept closed. Students are not to loiter in order to be with friends.
3. In the case of a fire drill, students in the office, restrooms, hallways or other common areas are to vacate the building as quickly as possible.
4. In the case of a lockdown or evacuation preparation drill, students in the office, restrooms, hallways or other common areas are to move to the nearest safe space e.g. classroom, office.
5. During a drill, a stairway may be closed to simulate a condition that could happen during an actual emergency. If your teacher finds your regular exit blocked, they will direct you to the nearest available exit.
6. Each teacher is to have the exit procedure for their room posted near the door of his/her room. Teachers will give specific instructions concerning procedures in their areas.

## FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the school year, many opportunities for educational field trips will be available. These are for the students' learning experience and offer them the chance to learn outside the school setting. When a field trip is being planned, the teacher will give out a permission form to take home for parents' approval. This will include information on the destination, times, and any possible costs. The student **MUST** return the permission form in order to go on the trip. Students must have all debts paid prior to attending these events. Students that have accumulated multiple discipline referrals, or referrals for severe discipline issues may be restricted from attending field trips, parties, and/or events.



## SCHOOL DELAYS/ CANCELLATIONS

Inclement weather or unusual circumstances occasionally necessitate a delayed opening of school or a cancellation. Delayed openings and cancellations will be announced on the school district website ([www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org)), Facebook page, and local television stations, as well as through phone and text messages.

Parents and students are urged **NOT TO CALL THE SCHOOLS**. School personnel generally do not arrive prior to 7:15 a.m., particularly in inclement weather. Calling the school for delay/cancellation information causes unnecessary congestion on the phone lines which are needed to handle



possible emergencies related to the circumstances. When weather is inclement, but school is not closed, students and parents should use their judgment. After a 10-15 minute wait at the bus stop, students can return home. A note is required to be given to the teacher upon return the next day so that the absence is excused. Students may be

dismissed early due to an emergency or weather situation. Parents are encouraged to develop a plan in the event this should occur.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

West Allegheny Middle School offers and encourages students to participate in a wide variety of activities and intramurals. Some of our activities include: Talent Show, National Academic League, Student Government, Indian Pride Student Team, Art Club, Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, History Bee, Math 24, Girls on the Run, iLead, Esports, and various chorus and band activities. Interscholastic athletic programs are available for students in 7th and 8th grade. Please be sure to check the WAMS Highlights for information regarding clubs and after-school activities as new clubs are being added every year!

## ADVISOR PROGRAM

Teachers and other staff members may meet once a week for thirty minutes with their Advisor groups. During this time students participate in a variety of activities, readings and/or discussions centered around bullying, service learning, and college/career readiness. Your advisor is a good person to talk with regarding any concerns you may have.

## BIG BROTHER / BIG SISTER PROGRAM

A program which helps school climate and sixth graders make a smooth transition to middle school is the Big Brother/Big Sister Program. Each trained eighth grader is given 2 or 3 sixth graders to nurture and support throughout the year. The students meet a few times during the year in the

cafeteria and discuss the behaviors expected at the dances and social events, encourage the use of agendas, and discuss grades, where to go for help, and any general questions the sixth graders may have. The eighth graders are encouraged to keep an eye out for the sixth graders in the hallways, at social events, and on the buses.

## **WAMS POWER HOUR**

This program provides opportunities for middle school students to get assistance with homework, study skills, tutoring, and/or skill review from various middle school teachers. WAMS POWER HOUR is available Monday through Wednesday from 2:35 to 3:30. Students are to come prepared with school assignments or skill areas to work on. Students need to make sure there is someone to pick them up at 3:30. Students may not walk home from WAMS POWER HOUR. There is no charge for this service.

## **GUIDANCE SERVICES**

Guidance services are available for every student. They can assist you with educational planning; interpretation of test scores, career information, study help, help with home, school, and/or social concerns, and any question you may feel they would like to discuss. Parents may request a team conference AT ANY TIME by contacting the middle school Student Services office. Please call 724-695-5228 to speak with a school counselor.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-teacher conferences occur two times per year, in late fall and spring. Conference requests are accommodated on a first come, first serve basis unless requested by your child's teachers. Notifications and conference schedules will be provided by your child's teachers in advance. Due to scheduling, not all conferences are able to be accommodated on the designated days. However, parents can request conferences with teachers at any time during the school year by contacting the middle school Student Services Department.

## **STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Middle School SAP Team was developed to meet the diverse needs of middle school learners. It is a group of specially trained school professionals who provide assistance and support for students who experience personal problems related to depression, social/peer problems, drug & alcohol use, eating/ sleeping difficulties, hostility/anger, educational problems, or family problems. The goals of the team are to develop an atmosphere of trust in which students will seek help from the team; assure students that problems are resolvable; acquire necessary counseling services for students in need before problems reach a crisis level. If you believe you are in need of assistance, please contact a counselor. Assistance is always available.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

### **Authority**

The Board of School Directors recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Administration shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.

**Homeless students** are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Children who are awaiting foster care placement including living in emergency, interim or respite foster care, kinship care, evaluation or diagnostic centers or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, temporary shelters, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children under the age of 18, abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers, or separated from parents/guardians for any other reason.
10. Living as school age parents/guardians in houses for school age parents/guardians if they have no other living accommodations.

**School of origin** is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

The Board designates the Superintendent or his/her designee to serve as the District's liaison for homeless students and families.

The District's liaison shall coordinate with:

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The District's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens within the District.

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless.

## **Enrollment/Placement**

To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, homeless students shall continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the District liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled. The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce

records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. The District will request a parent/guardian submit contact information. If the parent/guardian is unable to do so, the District Liaison will work with the parent/ guardian to establish a reliable method of communication. The District Liaison may also contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but this must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between two professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The enrolling district's liaison will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

If the District is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the District shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parents/guardians shall be provided with a written explanation of the District's decision, their right to appeal and the procedures to use for the appeal.

## **Services**

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

## **Transportation**

The District shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the School District.

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

## **Parent information Notice**

### **Services for Disabled Preschool Age Children**

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delay or physical or mental disabilities are eligible

for early entrance services. He or she is considered to have a developmental delay when difficulties exist in the areas of cognitive, communicative, physical social /emotional and self help development. Services for special needs children, below school age, who reside in suburban Allegheny County, are provided through two different systems linked by a transition process. Birth through age two programming is provided through the Pennsylvania

Department of Welfare funding and is coordinated by the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc. Students who are three years old to entry age are serviced through the Pennsylvania Department of Education funding. This preschool program is presently coordinated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Early Childhood and Family Support Services program, DART.

For more information, please contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc. at 412-885-6000 or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit/DART Program at (412) 394-5736.

### **Services for School Age Exceptional Students**

The school district provides a free, appropriate public education to exceptional students according to state and



federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school-age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act which was re-authorized in 1997 (IDEA –97) and the Chapter 14 Special Education Services and Programs State Regulations: Autism, Blindness/Visual Impairment, Deaf- Blindness, Deafness/Hearing Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disability, Orthopedic Impaired, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disability, Speech and Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury.

Identified students are provided with a continuum of services designed to meet the individual needs of eligible students. These services may include supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, placement in a part-time or full-time special education class in a regular school or placement in a full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and is based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling services that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits.

Parents of public school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the Building Principal or Director of Pupil Services. Please contact the Building Principal or Director of Pupil Services for the required form.

#### **Screening and Evaluation**

The West Allegheny School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school age students requiring special programs and services.

#### **Level 1: Review of group-based data**

Screening activities include DIEBLS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) grades kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup>, Grades 2 through 12 include cumulative enrollment records such as attendance, report cards grades, and achievement test scores (Scantron, PSSA's and Curriculum based Evaluations). Data gathered through a thorough review of these records may prompt a referral for screening a child for special education.

#### **Level 2: Review of hearing, vision, motor, speech and language**

The District routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity each year in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grade, vision acuity each year, kindergarten through Grade 12, and speech and language

(teacher, parent and outside agency referrals). Gross motor and fine motor skills are assessed by the classroom teacher on an on-going basis. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official File.

#### **Level 3: School Based Intervention Teams**

The goal of the School Based Intervention teams are to maximize individual student success in the regular classroom, while at the same time serving as a screening process for students who may be in need of special education services. Positive, researched based success-oriented programs which use intervention techniques within the regular classroom setting to help remove educational, behavioral or affective stumbling blocks for all students are implemented in grades K – 12. Referrals to school based intervention teams may be initiated by the classroom teacher.

The process involves three steps:

- (1) Identifying a student's need for academic and behavior support
- (2) Determining strategies needed for assisting the student
- (3) Implementing intervention strategies through a continuum of services

After an initial assessment of the student's academic, behavioral and/or coping skills, the team recommends strategies to be implemented to help the student achieve success in the regular classroom. The team determines what support is needed for the student to maintain a level of success in the classroom. These strategies are implemented, monitored and then evaluated based on goals set for the student. If the student's teachers report a positive change, the strategies are continued. If there is not progress, the student may be referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE).

### **The Multidisciplinary Evaluation (MDE)**

The MDE is a process to gather information that will be used to find out if children really do need special education and if so, the types of services needed.

Prior to an MDE, the District must obtain permission via the Permission to Evaluate form. Before an evaluation can occur, the form must be signed by the parent or legal guardian.

Evaluations are conducted by a certified school psychologist. Additional information is provided by the parents, classroom teacher, and other pertinent individuals that work with the student. All of this information is compiled into an Evaluation Report (ER). This report will recommend whether a child has one or more disabilities or mental giftedness. It also recommends whether or not the child requires special education and the type of program and services that the child needs. The ER may recommend that a child is not exceptional and therefore does not need special education services. If this is recommended, the report will list changes that may be made in the regular classroom to make the child more successful. All members of the MDT, including the parents, are entitled to review the ER.

Reevaluations for students, who are eligible for special education services, are compiled every three years or two years for students with intellectual disabilities or when requested by one or more members of the IEP team (please see information on Individualized Education Plan).

### **Individualized Education Plan**

Children who are regarded to be exceptional by the MDT team are entitled to receive special education services. The document that specifically addresses these services is called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Required members of the IEP team include: The child's parents, At least one of your child's regular education teachers, at least one special education teacher, A representative from the school district who: (1) Is qualified to provide or supervise special education programs (2) Knows about the general curriculum (3) Knows what resources the Local Education Agency (LEA) can offer, Someone who can interpret the evaluation results, who may already be a member of the team, At your request or that of the school, other people who know your child well or who have worked with your child, Your child (at age 14 when planning will be done for life after graduation or any time before that age when you want your child to be present), A representative from a vocational-technical school if a vocational-technical school is being considered for your child.

The IEP will review all of the evaluation material and will determine how your child is performing in school. The IEP team will write annual goals that can be measured and which meet the needs of your child.

IEPs for eligible students are developed on an annual basis, or sooner, if requested by one or more members of the IEP team.

### **Notice of Recommended Educational Placement**

Once the IEP has been developed with the IEP team; you will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). The NOREP explains the placement or class recommended for your child and explains your rights. You must approve the NOREP in writing for your child's first special education placement if you want it to go into effect. You will receive a NOREP with each completed IEP and you have 10 calendar days to return the NOREP. In circumstances when this form is NOT completed parental consent is NOT required, the school will proceed after 10 calendar days.

West Allegheny School District offers a continuum of educational services designed to meet the needs of eligible students including varying degrees of gifted, learning, and speech and language support. In addition, related services such as transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision support, and deaf and hearing support are available to those students that qualify.

Detailed information regarding special education procedures may be obtained by calling the Special Education Department at 724-695-5221.

### **Services for Protected Handicapped Students**

There are instances in which students are identified as handicapped or disabled, but may not qualify for Special Education services. If it is determined necessary, the school district will provide these students, without

discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to ensure equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. These services are outlined in a Chapter 15 Service Agreement. Questions regarding Chapter 15 should be directed to the Director of Pupil Services at 724-695-5221.

### **Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools**

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time, dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. The student must have a multidisciplinary team evaluation completed and an Individual Education plan must be developed with the public school, parents must sign a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement.

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the district Director of Pupil services.

### **Public Notice on Student Records**

The Education Records Plan for Exceptional Students is a state approved plan for the local school districts within the Allegheny Intermediate Unit which defines all procedures for collection, maintenance, and dissemination of educational records belonging to exceptional students.

Education records are needed to provide appropriate educational programs, but at the same time it is necessary to protect the rights of privacy and confidentiality of students and parents.

Official student education records are kept where a student attends a district operated class. Copies of the District Education Records Plan may be obtained from your building principal.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

The privacy rights of parents and students are mandated by federal legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Buckley Amendment), state regulations (Chapter 14 - Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12 - Student Rights and Responsibilities), and district policy.

The different categories of information maintained by the school district are as follows: educational and health records, personally identifiable information and directory information. With the exception of receiving school district, educational and health records, personally identifiable information cannot be disclosed or released without parental consent or adult student's (a student who is eighteen years of age or older, married or attending an institution of post secondary education) consent.

Information known as directory information can be released without consent. Directory information means information which would be considered not harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. This information includes the following: student's name, address, date and place of birth, courses taken, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Written, parental or adult student request is required for the disclosure of educational and health records and personally identifiable information. The consent must specify the records that may be disclosed and the purpose of the disclosure; and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. A written record of the disclosure must be maintained by the school district.

Parent or adult students have the right to inspect and review the students' educational records within thirty (30) days of the date the district receives a written request for access. Parents of eligible students should submit to the building principal a written request that identifies the specific records they wish to inspect. Parents or adult students can seek to amend the student's educational record that is believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The parent or eligible student in writing must clearly identify the parts of the record to be changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student will be notified of the decision and advise the individual of his/her right to a hearing regarding the requested amendment.

Parents or adult students have the right to file complaints concerning alleged failures of the District to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Such complaints should be directed to the Health, Educational and Welfare Office, Washington, D. C.

With regard to parents who do not understand English, the School District will attempt to inform them of their rights in their native language. Further information regarding the Policy of the Collection, Maintenance and Dissemination of Records is available through the principal's office.

SECTION: 6000 STUDENT SERVICES

# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TITLE: 6950 BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: JANUARY 29, 2000 (JAN 21, 2009)

REVISED: JULY 20, 2016, April 24, 2019

1. Purpose	<p>The West Allegheny School District is committed to fostering a safe, positive learning environment of mutual respect, honor, acceptance and encouragement, free from threat, harassment, and bullying/cyberbullying. West Allegheny recognizes that bullying/cyberbullying cannot only impede on the academic environment and growth, but also the vocational, social, emotional development of our students. Students and employees should be free from all types of bullying/cyberbullying stemming from peers and employees of the district; therefore bullying/cyberbullying will not be tolerated.</p>
2. Definitions	<p><b>Bullying/Cyberbullying</b> is intentional, unwanted, severe behavior between or among individuals or groups that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior may be repetitive, persistent and/or pervasive.</p> <p><b>Bullying</b> may include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Physical</b> – including, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings</li> <li>2. <b>Verbal</b> – including, but not limited to, taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threatening statements or gestures</li> <li>3. <b>Psychological or Relational</b> - including, but not limited to, spreading rumors, and engaging in social isolations or intimidation</li> </ol> <p><b>Cyberbullying</b> may include, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, malicious teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or employee of the school district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, images, videos or web site postings (including social media).</p> <p>These actions have the effect of doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interfering with a student's education</li> <li>2. Creating a threatening environment</li> <li>3. Disrupting the orderly operation of the school</li> <li>4. Causing a negative change in the dynamics of the school culture or group</li> </ol> <p><b>School setting</b> includes school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored</p>

activities, including bus stops and routes of travel to and from the bus stops, or to school property or school-sponsored activities.

The term bullying/cyberbullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

3. Authority

All forms of bullying/cyberbullying by district students and employees are hereby prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying/cyberbullying is in violation of this policy and shall be subject to appropriate discipline. The school district will not tolerate acts of bullying/cyberbullying occurring on school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities, including bus stops and routes of travel to and from the bus stops, or to school property or school-sponsored events.

Complaints of bullying/cyberbullying shall be investigated promptly by the school principal and/or his/her designee, and corrective action shall be taken.

The West Allegheny School District shall at least annually inform students, parents and employees through awareness activities that bullying/cyberbullying will not be tolerated.

4. Delegation of Responsibility

Each student and employee shall be responsible for respecting the rights of all students/employees and to ensure an educational environment free from all forms of bullying/cyberbullying.

Students and employees shall receive information regarding this policy and shall be expected to report to their school principal and/or his/her designee any suspected incidents of bullying/cyberbullying involving themselves or other district students or employees.

Students or employees who have been bullied/cyberbullied are encouraged to report such incidents to a school employee, an administrator, or through another designated reporting system without repercussion.

Parents/Guardians shall receive information regarding this policy, at least annually, and shall be encouraged to report to their administrator(s) any suspected incidents of bullying/cyberbullying involving their own child or other district students.

Each employee of the West Allegheny School District shall be responsible for attempting to maintain an educational environment free of bullying/cyberbullying and ensure the rights of all students are respected.

Employees shall be observant of bullying/cyberbullying, take appropriate actions to intervene upon observing or learning of a bullying/cyberbullying incident and report the bullying/cyberbullying to the school administrator(s).

Upon learning of a bullying/cyberbullying incident, the school principal and/or his/her designee shall undertake a thorough investigation. The school principal and/or his/her designee will inform parents/guardians of any impacted student(s) and person(s) accused of the complaint. The

<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<p>administrator(s) will report incidents of bullying/cyberbullying to the superintendent or designee and the superintendent and/or designee will, where appropriate, notify the proper authorities.</p> <p>The district shall provide ongoing educational programs for employees, students and parents concerning the harmfulness of bullying/cyberbullying, the identification of bullying/cyberbullying, and appropriate responsive actions to address bullying/cyberbullying.</p> <p><u>Discipline</u></p> <p>A violation of this policy shall subject the offending student to appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with the student code of conduct, which may include suspension or expulsion. Additionally, Act 26 of 2015 makes cyberbullying a crime, and issues of cyberbullying or bullying may be referred to law enforcement.</p> <p><u>Confidentiality</u></p> <p>The West Allegheny School District recognizes that both the reporting <del>complain</del>ing students or employees and the alleged bully/cyberbully have a right to maintain the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the reporting person(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, any individuals impacted and the witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any discovery or disclosure obligations. As limited by FERPA protections, the principal or his/her designee may inform the complaining student/parents/guardians or employees of the outcome of the investigation.</p> <p><u>Reprisal</u></p> <p>Anyone who retaliates against another student and/or employee for reporting bullying/cyberbullying, assisting or testifying in the investigation or hearing will be subject to disciplinary action.</p> <p><u>Display and Dissemination</u></p> <p>This policy will be displayed and accessible for review in the following manners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A copy of this policy shall be available on the school district's publicly accessible web site.</li> <li>2. A copy of this policy shall be posted in every classroom.</li> <li>3. A copy of this policy shall be posted in each school where notices are usually posted.</li> <li>4. A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to parents annually along with a copy of the student code of conduct.</li> </ol> <p>The terms of this policy shall be reviewed with students at least once every school year.</p>
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SECTION: PUPILS

# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TITLE: ANTI-HAZING 6540

ADOPTED: 10/19/2016

REVISED:

1. Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, supportive and positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the District and are prohibited at all times.
2. Authority	<p>The Board of School Directors prohibits hazing, as part of any school-sponsored or recognized student activity regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or outside of school hours.</p> <p>No administrator, student, parent/guardian, coach, sponsor, volunteer, or District employee shall plan, direct, encourage, condone, tolerate, assist, engage in, or ignore any hazing activity.</p> <p>The Board encourages students who have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to their coach, sponsor and/or a building administrator.</p>
3. Definitions	<p>For the purpose of this policy, <b>hazing</b> is defined as any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers or jeopardizes the mental health, physical health, or safety of a person or causes willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization, team, club or group operating under the sanction of or recognized by the West Allegheny School District. The term shall include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced sexual activity, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage, drug, controlled substance or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical or psychological health or safety of the individual.</li> <li>• Any activity that would subject an individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in humiliation, harassment, embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual(s).</li> <li>• Any willful destruction or removal of public or private property.</li> </ul> <p>For the purpose of this policy, any activity, as described above, upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.</p>



<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>Students, parents/guardians, administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and district employees alerted to incidents of hazing shall immediately intervene and report such conduct to a building administrator.</p> <p>Upon learning of a hazing incident, the building principal and/or athletic director and/or his/her designee shall undertake a thorough investigation. The building principal and/or athletic director and/or his/her designee will inform parents/guardians of the victim and person accused of the complaint. The administrator(s) will report incidents of hazing to the superintendent or designee immediately and the superintendent and/or designee will, where appropriate, notify the proper authorities.</p>
<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<p><u>Complaint Procedure</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When a student believes that s/he has been subjected to or will be subjected to hazing, the student shall promptly report the incident or potential incident, orally and/or in writing, to their level coach or sponsor of the activity and/or building administrator.</li> <li>2. If a coach/activity advisor witnesses, or is made aware of by another person, an incident of hazing, s/he shall intervene and immediately report the details of the incident to the Athletic Director and/or administrator(s) of the building(s) which the students involved attend.</li> <li>3. The administrator shall, upon receipt of a complaint, conduct a timely, impartial, thorough, and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.</li> <li>4. The administrator shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint.</li> </ol> <p><u>Disciplinary Measures</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the administrator shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, the student(s) responsible for the acts may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity.</li> <li>2. If the investigation results in a substantiated finding that a coach, sponsor or volunteer affiliated with the activity or organization planned, directed, encouraged, assisted, engaged in, condoned, or ignored any violation of this policy, s/he will be disciplined appropriately in accordance with Board policy, applicable regulations and laws. Discipline could include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the position as coach, sponsor or volunteer and/or dismissal from district employment.</li> <li>3. If a team, organization or group authorizes hazing in a blatant disregard of this policy or other applicable district rules, penalties may also include recession of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the West Allegheny School District.</li> <li>4. Any person who causes, participates or ignores hazing may also be subject to criminal prosecution.</li> </ol>

SECTION: PUPILS

# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TITLE: Canine Searches 6850

ADOPTED:

REVISED:

1. Purpose	School administrators have a compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds. In order to reinforce this purpose, generalized and random locker, vehicle and bag searches, including but not limited to backpacks, gym bags, draw string bags, (not physically on a student's person), to include canine sniff searches, are authorized and may be made without notice and require no individualized suspicion. If a drug sniffing dog reacts to the purported presence of an illegal substance, such reaction shall constitute reasonable individualized suspicion so as to permit a search of the individual's locker, vehicle or bag.
2. Authority	The Board authorizes the North Fayette Police Department, other municipalities assisting the NFPD, and private firms to assist the district by providing the services of their canine officer.
3. Delegation of Responsibility	<p>A search of school property shall be conducted at any time to further the District's compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds.</p> <p>In order to reinforce the within purpose, generalized and random locker, vehicle and bag searches, including but not limited to backpacks, gym bags, draw string bags, (not physically on a student's person), to include canine sniff searches, are authorized and may be made without notice and require no individualized suspicion. If a drug sniffing dog reacts to the purported presence of an illegal substance, such reaction shall constitute reasonable individualized suspicion so as to permit a search of the individual's locker, vehicle or bag. Drug sniffing dogs will not be used to search a student's individual person. No bag search shall occur while the bag is physically on a student's individual person.</p> <p>All student handbooks shall include language explaining the use of canine searches on occasion throughout each school year. The administration shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of canine searches in the school and report such to the Board.</p>

<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p>Dogs used for canine searches in the schools by the police shall be appropriately trained and certified.</p> <p>Use of canine searches at least once per semester is deemed adequate. However, the district may choose to conduct canine searches whenever it deems necessary further its compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds.</p> <p><u>Procedure</u></p> <p>The attending officer shall accompany the dog to the school. While the dog works, building principals and/or administrators shall temporarily close the area containing lockers, bags, or vehicles to be searched.</p> <p>The following procedure will be used if the dog alerts to a locker, bag, or vehicle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The locker number, backpack or vehicle will be noted. Adjacent lockers, bags, and vehicles will also be noted when necessary. A second dog may be used to verify any initial locker alert.</li> <li>2. After a canine officer and handler have completed the search, the building principals will conduct searches of the lockers. The building principal shall notify the student that his/her locker, bag or vehicle is going to be searched and invite him/her to be present. The administration shall conduct the search. However, when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a locker contains materials which pose a threat to the health, welfare, or safety of the school population, student lockers may be searched without prior warning. When a canine search indicates reasonable suspicion of a crime or violation of school rules, the canine officer shall remain at the scene with administrators or the proper authorities will be contacted if a private firm is used.</li> <li>3. If drug paraphernalia or controlled substances or those items thought to be controlled substances, are found, the parent/guardian shall be contacted immediately and requested to come to the school. An investigation shall be conducted by the building principal according to Board policy and school procedures.</li> <li>4. If no drugs are found, the student will return to class. The building principal shall contact the student's parents/guardians before the end of the school day to explain the procedure that has occurred. Where possible, the student will be invited to be present with the principal when the telephone call is made.</li> <li>5. The Superintendent shall notify the Board in a timely fashion.</li> </ol>
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SECTION: 6300

# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TITLE: Attendance

REVISED: July 9, 2003

November 17, 2004

August 15, 2012

August 15, 2018

June 17, 2020

1. Purpose	The Board believes that there is a strong correlation between regular school attendance and academic success. The Board supports a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing attendance issues. <a href="#">[1]</a>
2. Authority	Attendance shall be required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that authorized district staff may excuse a student for temporary absences upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence. <a href="#">[2]</a> <a href="#">[3]</a> <a href="#">[4]</a> <a href="#">[5]</a> <a href="#">[6]</a> <a href="#">[7]</a>
3. Definitions	<p>The Board shall establish and enforce attendance requirements, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.</p> <p>Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a student's life from the time the student's person in parental relation elects to have the student enter school, and which shall be no later than six (6) years of age until the student reaches eighteen (18) years of age. The term does not include a student who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.<a href="#">[8]</a><a href="#">[9]</a></p> <p>Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.<a href="#">[9]</a></p> <p>Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.<a href="#">[9]</a></p> <p>Person in parental relation shall mean a:<a href="#">[9]</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.</li> <li>2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.</li> <li>3. Guardian of the person of a student.</li> <li>4. Person with whom a student lives and who is acting in a parental role of a student. This definition shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent student as defined by law.<a href="#">[10]</a></li> </ol> <p>School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a student's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the</p>

	<p>program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.<a href="#">[9]</a></p>
4. Delegation of Responsibility	<p>The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, person in parental relation, staff, local children and youth agency, and local magisterial district judges about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks, district website and other efficient communication methods.<a href="#">[1]</a><a href="#">[11]</a></p> <p>The Superintendent shall require the signature of the person in parental relation confirming that the policy has been reviewed and that the person in parental relation understands the compulsory school attendance requirements.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Administrator,</li> <li>• Attendance Officer,</li> <li>• Home and School Visitor,</li> <li>• Student Services Representative,</li> </ul> <p>shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.<a href="#">[12]</a><a href="#">[13]</a></li> <li>2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.</li> <li>3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency, or the appropriate judge.</li> <li>4. Clarify the district's responsibility for collaboration with nonpublic schools in the enforcement of compulsory school attendance requirements.</li> <li>5. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.</li> </ol>

5. Guidelines

Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.[\[5\]](#)

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction; or the student's placement is instruction in the home.[\[2\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

The following students shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, students who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter11/s11.34.html>
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught.[\[5\]](#)
3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools.
4. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with law.[\[5\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)
5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.[\[5\]](#)
6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, as well as students fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.[\[7\]](#)
7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly engaged in useful and lawful employment during the school session and holding a valid employment certificate. Regularly engaged means thirty-five (35) or more hours per week of employment.[\[7\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons.[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[\[6\]](#)
3. Quarantine.
4. Family emergency.

5. Recovery from accident.
6. Homebound Instruction. A student of school age enrolled in the public schools who is homebound and unable to attend the public schools as determined by a medical examination, and who is receiving approved homebound instruction or instruction in the home, shall be counted for attendance purposes as if in regular school attendance. During the time such homebound student is able to receive instruction in the home, the District or intermediate unit or both shall provide such homebound instruction or instruction in the home.
7. Required court attendance.
8. Death in family.
9. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.[\[1\]\[6\]](#)
10. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined by law, for an event or funeral.
  - a. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location and time of the event or funeral.
  - b. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the district prior to being excused from school.
11. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.[\[22\]](#)
12. Non-school -sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:[\[6\]\[23\]](#)
  - a. The person in parental relation submits the required documentation for excusal at least one week prior to the absence.
  - b. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
  - c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation and the Superintendent.
  - d. Educational trips are to equal no more than five (5) days in a school year. International educational trips may be given consideration for up to ten (10) days in a school year. In addition, trips will not be approved during state standardized testing periods. Trips also will not be approved for any student who has incurred ten (10) or more absences.
13. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
14. Other urgent reasons. that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness and foster care.[\[3\]\[6\]](#)

The district may limit the number and duration of non-school -sponsored educational tours or trips and college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

NOTE: The Superintendent or designee may require a written statement signed by the state licensed health care practitioner stating the time of the student's appointment.

#### **Tardiness to School-**

Students who are tardy to school shall report directly to the appropriate school office. The student will be issued a pass to report to class. Failure to report to the school office will result in an illegal/unexcused absence for the entire day. A maximum of ten (10) instances of excused tardiness will be accepted every school year.

At the secondary level, upon accumulation of three (3) instances of unexcused tardiness, a warning will be given to the student and parent/ guardian. A detention will be assigned to the student after four (4) instances of unexcused tardiness. Detention will continue to be assigned for each subsequent, unexcused tardy.

#### ***Temporary Excusals -***

The following students may be temporarily excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools:

1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.[\[5\]](#)[\[14\]](#)
2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:[\[22\]](#)[\[24\]](#)
  - a. The person in parental relation submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.
  - b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
  - c. Following each absence, the person in parental relation shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.
3. School age students unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with the approval of the Secretary of Education.

#### ***Parental Notice of Absence***

Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within five (5) days of the absence.

A maximum of eight (8) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond eight (8) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

Medical excuses are required for absences of five (5) or more consecutive days.



### Unexcused/Unlawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.[\[9\]](#)

Students who miss ten (10) consecutive days may be dropped from the active membership role unless the school is provided with evidence the excuse is legal or the school is pursuing compulsory attendance prosecution (§ 11.24).

District staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation upon a student being dropped from the active membership role.

### Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements

#### *Student is Truant –*

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.[\[25\]](#)

The notice shall:[\[25\]](#)

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;
2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and
3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the student's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.
4. The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[25\]](#)

If the student incurs three (3) additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall hold a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[25\]](#)

#### *School Attendance Improvement Conference -*

District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[25\]](#)

The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.[\[9\]](#)

The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:[\[9\]](#)

1. The student.
2. The student's person in parental relation.
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
4. Appropriate school personnel.
5. Recommended service providers.

Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.[\[25\]](#)

The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff. [\[25\]](#)

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has ~~passed~~ been held and the student has incurred six (6) or more days of unexcused absences. [\[25\]](#)

*Student is Habitually Truant -*

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff: [\[26\]](#)

1. Shall refer the student to:
  - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
  - b. The local children and youth agency.
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student. [\[26\]](#)

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall: [\[26\]](#)

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program;  
or
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based

attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such program. [26]

Regardless of age, when district staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a School Attendance Improvement Conference. [26]

#### *Filing a Citation -*

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled. [27]

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law. [27]

#### Special Needs and Accommodations

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, Superintendent or designee shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

#### Discipline

The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior. [25]

#### Legal

1. [22 PA Code 11.41](#)
2. [22 PA Code 11.23](#)
3. [22 PA Code 11.25](#)
4. [22 PA Code 12.1](#)
5. [24 P.S. 1327](#)
6. [24 P.S. 1329](#)
7. [24 P.S. 1330](#)
8. [22 PA Code 11.13](#)
9. [24 P.S. 1326](#)
10. [42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302](#)
11. [24 P.S. 510.2](#)
12. [24 P.S. 1332](#)
13. [24 P.S. 1339](#)
14. [22 PA Code 11.22](#)
15. [22 PA Code 11.28](#)
16. [22 PA Code 11.34](#)
17. [22 PA Code 11.32](#)
18. [22 PA Code 11.5](#)
19. [22 PA Code 11.31](#)

	<a href="#"><u>20. 22 PA Code 11.31a</u></a> <a href="#"><u>21. 24 P.S. 1327.1</u></a> <a href="#"><u>22. 22 PA Code 11.21</u></a> <a href="#"><u>23. 22 PA Code 11.26</u></a> <a href="#"><u>24. 24 P.S. 1546</u></a> <a href="#"><u>25. 24 P.S. 1333</u></a> <a href="#"><u>26. 24 P.S. 1333.1</u></a> <a href="#"><u>27. 24 P.S. 1333.2</u></a> <a href="#"><u>22 PA Code 11.24</u></a> <a href="#"><u>22 PA Code 11.8</u></a>
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# WEST ALLEGHENY TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

## West Allegheny School District – Transportation Guidelines and Expectations

The West Allegheny School District Administration recognizes that safety is paramount in transportation. The administration is committed to working with the Board of Education, parents, students, principals, drivers and staff to maintain a safe and orderly environment. The following guidelines are in place to ensure positive and safe passage to and from school and school sponsored events.

Transportation to and from school is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege may result in loss of transportation to and from school. When you lose your transportation privileges, you cannot ride a bus owned by the Monark Bus Company and contracted by the West Allegheny School District during the time of the suspension.

***Video camera systems with audio capability are installed on Monark Transportation School Buses. The information from these tapes can be used to determine disciplinary action. The cameras on buses and vans are to help ensure the safety of all students and staff.***

Special education students will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures, including suspensions from riding the bus as regular education students unless otherwise noted in the student's IEP. The IEP will be reviewed to be sure that there are not any special circumstances that would warrant alternative forms of discipline, especially when a bus suspension is under consideration.

It is to be understood that in the event of a bus suspension, the student is still required to attend school and any absence during the suspension without a valid written excuse will result in school officials following the standard school truancy process.

### DELAY OR CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

The Transportation Department could be impacted by several variables during the winter weather season. The main factor for a delay or cancellation decision is weather conditions, but other factors do play a part.

The following are the steps that the department uses to make a recommendation for a delay or cancellation:

1. Weather conditions and local radar are monitored to determine the time and duration of snowfall. The temperature and wind chill are also considered.
2. Early morning checks of the roads are conducted. Typically starting at 4:00 AM, a sampling of township and state roads are driven to check road conditions.

3. Township and state road crews' status of snow removal and road treatment is monitored to determine what the road conditions will be like during student pickup hours.

The Superintendent makes the decision to delay or cancel school based on the data collected in the previous stated steps. Students and staff are notified via School Messenger, the district's mass phone notification system. Additionally, local media outlets are notified, and the West Allegheny Website and Facebook accounts are updated.

**The following are expectations all drivers are expected to follow in operating a bus in the West Allegheny School District.**

1. Drivers will greet all students as they enter and exit the bus in a pleasant and welcoming manner.
2. Drivers will assign all students an area or seat on the bus and set expectations for students to sit in assigned seats or areas.
3. Drivers will maintain focus on student safety and not engage in distracting behavior including but not limited to cell phone usage.
4. Drivers will maintain open lines of communication with teachers, administrators and the Monark Transportation administration in regards to the safety, security and behavior of all students.
5. Drivers will act in a professional manner at all times when interacting with students, parents, staff members and administrators.

**The following are expectations all administrators are expected to follow in supporting the safe operations of district transportation**

1. Administrators and/or their designees will reinforce seating arrangements on all buses.
2. Administrators and/or their designees will enforce all school and school bus safety rules when made aware of a violation.
3. Administrators and/or their designees will maintain open lines of communication with bus drivers, Monark Transportation administration and District Office Administration in regards to transportation related issues.
4. Administrators and/or their designees will request and review video from any bus violation that reaches level three or higher in the transportation guidelines and expectations.

**The following are five expectations all students are expected to adhere to during transportation to and from school.**

1. Students will sit in their assigned area or seat and face forward at all times. No standing is permitted while the bus is in motion.
2. Students will keep hands, feet and personal belongings to themselves and out of the bus aisle.
3. Students will wait their turn to enter and exit the bus at the stop for which they are assigned.
4. Students will use appropriate language, tone and volume when speaking on the bus.
5. Students will be respectful of all other students and the driver while on the bus and at the bus stop.
6. Students will not eat or drink on the bus.

7. Students will not play loud or distracting music on the bus.

**Parents can contribute to the efficient and safe transportation of their children in the following ways:**

1. Ensure that students are at their designated bus stop at least five minutes prior to bus arrival time. Drivers are not required to wait for children as all children further down the route would then be forced to wait that much longer.
2. Ensure students stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.
3. Ensure students cross in front of the bus when crossing the road or highway.
4. Ensure students wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and red lights are flashing  
before attempting to enter or leave the bus.
5. Ensure special items and projects are transported by parents to school rather than on the bus due to space and safety consideration.
6. Ensure students do not chase after a bus.
7. Ensure students are orderly while awaiting the bus.
8. Ensure that the bus stop is safe and maintained.
9. Ensure that if driving students to the bus stop you do not interfere with the traffic pattern  
of the bus.

**The district stance is that all students should ride their assigned bus to and from school.**

*NOTE: In case of the need for an **emergency** bus change, a note from a parent must be submitted to the office for approval. **This does not guarantee that approval will be granted.** If approval is given, the student will receive a bus pass to give to the bus driver. Students must submit the note to the office first thing in the morning in order to arrange for this change.*

Misbehaviors and interventions are categorized across four levels based on seriousness / frequency of occurrence.



## Level I

Level I offenses include minor misbehaviors on the part of the student, which are disruptive and impede or interfere with the orderly and safe operation of the school bus. These misbehaviors are expected to be addressed by the bus driver who observes the incident, but may require the intervention of an administrator. An accurate record of the offense, corrective and intervention supports, and disciplinary action must be maintained by the bus driver. Repeated instances of Level I behavior, despite redirection or intervention, may constitute a violation at a higher level with referral to the appropriate building administrator.

### *Examples of Level I Violations Including but not Limited to:*

- Disrespectful actions or language towards peers, adults, and/or property
- Inappropriate and/or profane language or gesture not directed at others
- Not following bus driver directions
- Inappropriate tone or volume when speaking on the bus (yelling and screaming)
- Standing up or moving seat-to-seat
- Unauthorized use of electronic devices
- Distracting loud music or noises
- Eating or drinking on the bus
- Leaving trash on the bus
- Students seated out of assigned area

### *Examples of Level I Consequences Including but not Limited to:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal redirection</li><li>• Special assigned seat</li><li>• Referral to building administration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timely parent notification (by phone and documented in writing)</li><li>• Behavior contract</li></ul>
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## Level II

Level II offenses are misbehaviors whose frequency or seriousness disrupt the safe operation of the school bus. These infractions can result from the continuation of Level I misbehaviors and/or include new offenses. The consequences are serious enough to require disciplinary action taken by administrative personnel.

### *Examples of Level II Violations Including but not Limited to:*

- Repeated Level I Violations or Level I with aggravating circumstances
- Verbal/non-verbal flagrant disrespect toward bus drivers or other students
- Agitating/instigating comments between students
- Horseplay
- Use of obscene language/gestures toward others
- Pushing, shoving or tripping other students in line
- Intentionally distracting the bus driver
- Inappropriate misuse of technology (videotaping other students)
- Intentionally boarding an unassigned bus
- Exiting the bus at an unassigned stop

### *Examples of Level II Consequences Including but not Limited to:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal redirection</li><li>• Special assigned seat</li><li>• Referral to building administration</li><li>• Detention</li><li>• In School Suspension</li><li>• Out of School Suspension</li><li>• 1-3 day Bus Suspension</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent notification and possible conference</li><li>• Referral to SAP</li><li>• Withdrawal of privileges and/or participation in school activities</li><li>• Written reprimand</li><li>• Behavior contract</li></ul>
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### Level III

Level III offenses are acts whose frequency or seriousness impact the safety of students and staff and are directed against persons or properties. These misbehaviors could endanger the health and safety the individual or other individuals.

#### *Examples of Level III Violations Including but not Limited to:*

- Repeated Level II Violations or Level II with aggravating circumstances
- Vandalism (Less than \$100) or Petty theft (less than \$100)
- Disorderly conduct
- Major disruption on the bus caused by the use of smoke/stink bombs, fireworks, etc.
- Fighting, harassment, threatening comments, simple assault, hazing
- Act or acts of discrimination and/or intimidating behaviors intended to demean another person
- Bullying/Cyber-bullying
- Sexual misconduct, indecent exposure
- Sexual harassment
- Possession of pornography or other illegal material, sexting
- Use/possession of drugs and or alcohol, look-alikes, and/or paraphernalia (non- distribution amount)
- Use/possession of tobacco and/or related products, look alike products (2<sup>nd</sup> offense)
- Throwing items out of the bus window
- Throwing items at other people on the bus
- Hanging out the bus window

#### *Examples of Level III Consequences Including but not Limited to:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to a 10 day bus suspension</li><li>• Up to a 10 day suspension</li><li>• Law enforcement/charges</li><li>• Due Process</li><li>• Restitution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referral to SAP</li><li>• Parent Conference</li><li>• Activity Restriction (examples include: school sponsored trips, dances, commencement exercises, etc.)</li></ul>
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## Level IV

Level IV offenses pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of others. These criminal acts always require administrative actions and may require the removal of the student from district transportation and /or school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities and possible action by the West Allegheny School Board.

### *Examples of Level IV Violations Including but not Limited to:*

- Repeated Level III Violations or Level III with aggravating circumstances
- Possession of a weapon or look-alike weapon of any kind on school property including school sponsored events and transportation to or from school
- Arson or attempted arson
- Tampering with security/safety equipment and/or driving instruments
- Terroristic threats or acts
- Commission of a criminal felony on the school bus
- Aggravated assault or sexual assault
- Distribution of pornography (including but not limited to child pornography)
- Distribution and/or intent to sell drugs, alcohol, paraphernalia, or look-alike substances
- Vandalism and/or theft over \$100
- Possession/use of explosive devices

### *Examples of Level IV Consequences Including but not Limited to:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal from district transportation</li><li>• Out of School Suspension</li><li>• Alternative Education Placement</li><li>• Restitution</li><li>• Expulsion</li><li>• Superintendent's hearing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Board of Director's hearing</li><li>• Involvement of law enforcement with potential for criminal charges</li><li>• Applicable Level III consequences</li><li>• Activity restriction (examples include: school sponsored trips, dances, commencement exercises, e</li></ul>
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