



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

2026-2027
Student Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) is a tuition-free, private, state-funded school approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We are proudly accredited by the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) and the Middle States Association (MSA). WPSD provides a unique educational environment where deaf and hard-of-hearing children acquire the essential skills needed to thrive in higher education and future careers. While our core programming is state-funded, we rely on private philanthropy to enhance our campus renovations and after-school programs.

This handbook is designed to give parents and guardians a clear overview of our academic programming, residential life, after-school opportunities, school regulations, and student expectations.

While this manual answers many common questions, it is not a substitute for personal communication. We strongly believe that family involvement is vital to student success, and we encourage you to stay in close contact with our team. If you ever need clarification on a school policy, please reach out directly to an administrator.

We look forward to a wonderful and productive school year together!

It is the policy of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf not to discriminate in its programs of education, employment and all other activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Any complaints of discrimination should be directed to:

Ms. Lauren Hayes, Compliance Officer
Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf
300 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218-1469
Telephone: (412) 371-7000
FAX: (412) 244-4210
Web Site: <http://www.wpsd.org>

Mission

We are dedicated to fostering the academic, social, and personal success of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind students through dynamic, student-centered educational programs grounded in American Sign Language and English.

Our students always come first.

Vision

Our students will be confident, engaged, and prepared to shape their futures, rooted in lasting relationships, strong identities, and the ability to make a meaningful impact on the world.

Our students will be prepared for life.

Values

Access: We fully embrace both American Sign Language and English to ensure that every individual can openly and meaningfully engage in our school community.

Belonging: We cultivate a supportive and inclusive community built on trust, care, and meaningful relationships among students, families, staff, alumni, and partners.

Commitment: We commit to our students, families, and one another by setting high expectations, taking responsibility, and promoting mutual accountability.



School Personnel

Administrators

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Middle School and High School Principal
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Elementary Principal
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Children's Center Principal
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Nursing Supervisor
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Supervisor of Choices for Children/ Children's Services
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Supervisor of Information Technology Systems
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IEP Coordinator
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School Staff

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Front Office

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Health Center

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School & Attendance Office

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SchoolCafe Registration
Jennifer Morris

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Transportation Office
Dr. Donald Mazreku, D.Ed.

412-244-4269
dmazreku@wpsd.org

Each of these numbers will connect you directly to the people listed above. If the person you are calling is not available, you may leave a message or contact the front office at (412) 371-7000 for assistance.

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2026-2027 Calendar

Date	Event:	Date	Event:
August 23	Residential Students return	March 8	Long Weekend – No Classes (Snow Make Up Day #2)
			Residential Students return
August 24	First Day of School	March 9	Classes Resume
September 7	Labor Day – No Classes	March 25	Students dismissed at 12:30 PM
		March 26	Spring Break begins
	Residential Students return	April 4	Residential Students return
September 8	Classes Resume	April 5	Classes Resume
October 12	Columbus Day – No Classes	April 19	Long Weekend - No Classes (Snow Make Up Day #3)
	Residential Students return		Residential Students return
		April 20	Classes Resume
November 23	Thanksgiving Break begins	May 10	Long Weekend – No Classes (Snow Make Up Day #4)
December 2	Residential Students return		Residential Students return
December 3	Classes Resume	May 11	Classes Resume
December 21	Winter Break begins	May 31	Memorial Day – No Classes
January 3	Residential Students return		Residential Students return
January 4	Classes Resume	June 1	Classes Resume
January 18	Martin Luther King Holiday – No Classes (Snow Make Up Day #1)	June 10	Graduation Day
	Residential Students return	June 11	Last Day of School
January 19	Classes Resume	June 11	Students dismissed at 12:00 PM
February 15	President’s Day – No Classes	*Note: The calendar is subject to change A copy of the 2026-2027 school calendar can be found here: https://www.wpsd.org/parents/student-calendar/	
	Residential Students return		
February 16	Classes Resume		

Parent/Guardian Information

Partnering with Families

Parents and guardians are essential members of the educational team at WPSD. As a child's first teachers, you shape the foundation of their early growth and development. At home, you provide the environment where students apply what they learn in the classroom, introducing life experiences that spark curiosity and reinforcing key concepts taught at school. Your values deeply influence your child's manners, behavior, and motivation. We recognize the tremendous responsibility of raising a child, and we are dedicated to providing the support you need to ensure the best possible education for your child.

To maintain a safe and nurturing environment, we ask families to partner with WPSD in discouraging the use of tobacco and alcohol, and in strictly forbidding illegal drugs and weapons. We also ask for your collaboration in motivating students to strive for higher academic achievement and reach their personal goals.

Campus Visits and Observations

We encourage parents and guardians to visit our classrooms and the Residence to get to know your child's teachers, residential supervisors, and classmates. To arrange a classroom or residential observation, please contact your child's teacher, the Principal, or the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life.

Staying Connected and Informed

We believe consistent communication is key to a successful school year. Here is how we keep you updated:

- Weekly Updates: Parents and guardians will receive a "weekend packet" via email every Friday. This information is also available on the WPSD website under the *Parents* tab. Please check your email regularly for school-wide updates.
- Elementary School News: Families of Elementary students will receive a monthly newsletter called **WPSD Lion Cubs InstaSnaps** which offers a list of upcoming events. It also highlights special happenings at each grade level.
- Middle and High School News: Families of Middle School and High School students will receive a weekly newsletter, which offers information about upcoming events. A monthly newsletter, **Lion Pride Lookout**, will also be shared with more comprehensive information.

Please be sure to return signed forms if necessary

Parent-Staff Organization (PSO)

The WPSD Parent-Staff Organization (PSO) is a collaborative community dedicated to supporting our students and enriching their school experience. The PSO focuses on three primary goals:

1. Information Sharing: Keeping members informed with up-to-date details regarding school events and initiatives.
2. Student Activities: Planning and sponsoring engaging activities that directly benefit our students.
3. Fundraising: Raising funds to support special student programs and campus projects.

Membership and Leadership

Membership is open to all staff members, parents, legal guardians, and grandparents of students currently enrolled at WPSD. The organization is led by an elected board of officers, including a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Meetings

The PSO meets online on a quarterly basis, making it convenient for families across Western Pennsylvania to participate. Meeting dates, times, and digital access links are posted at the beginning of each school year on the WPSD website under the Parents tab. We encourage you to join us and get involved!

General Attendance Guidelines

Regular attendance is vital to each child's educational success. There is a direct relationship between consistent school attendance and academic achievement; students who attend school daily earn better grades, develop stronger accountability, and build a meaningful sense of belonging within the campus community.

For these reasons, we strongly discourage keeping children home unless it is absolutely necessary. Long weekends and extended holiday breaks are intentionally built into the academic calendar, and we ask parents and guardians to schedule routine medical and dental appointments during these designated times whenever possible.

Managing Absences and Schedule Changes

We understand that emergencies and unexpected events arise. If you must keep your child home or pick them up early, please observe the following guidelines:

- Reporting Changes: Please contact attendance@wpsd.org immediately to report any early pick-ups or student absences.
- Special Events & Trips: If a student is absent the day immediately following a special school event, trip, or tournament, the absence will automatically be recorded as **unexcused** unless an official doctor's note is provided.

- After-School Event Notes: Written notification is required if a student's normal routine changes because they are staying on campus for an after-school or evening activity.

Written Excuses and Permanent Records

Attendance becomes a part of each student's permanent academic record. Under Pennsylvania state law, a written excuse is required for *every single absence*.

Upon your child's return to school, please submit an absentee note or excuse to attendance@wpsd.org. The note should include:

- The student's full name
- The specific date(s) of the absence
- The student's school department
- The exact reason for the absence

Note: All submitted written excuses and early dismissal notes are securely maintained in your child's permanent school attendance file.



Approved (Excused) Absences

In accordance with Title 22, Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 11 (Pupil Attendance) of the Regulations of the State Board of Education, an absence is only considered approved and excused for the following reasons:

- Illness or Health Care appointments (medical, dental, or vision)
- Death in the immediate family
- Observance of religious holidays
- Pre-approved educational tours and trips (up to 5 days per year)
- Other approved educational services (e.g., specific tutorial work, graduation preparations, work-study programs, or homebound instruction)
- Inclement weather: Student absences or tardies are automatically excused if the student's local home school district has an official weather-related delay or closing.

Verification Requirement

To clear an absence, a written excuse from a parent/guardian or an official doctor's note must be submitted to the department Principal's office within five (5) school days of the student's return. If a written excuse is not received within this timeframe, the absence will permanently be recorded as unexcused.

Pennsylvania Truancy Law (Act 138)

Under Pennsylvania state law, school absences are strictly monitored, and specific legal procedures are triggered based on the number of unexcused days accumulated.

Truancy (3 Unexcused Absences)

A student is legally identified as truant once they accumulate three (3) unexcused absences within a single school year.

- Written Notice: WPSD will notify parents/guardians in writing within ten (10) school days of the third unexcused absence. This notice will be delivered in your preferred language and mode of communication, outlining the legal consequences if additional absences occur.
- Attendance Conference: The school may offer a Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) at this stage. If the student continues to accumulate unexcused absences after this notice, a conference *must* be held to develop an attendance plan.

Habitual Truancy (6 or More Unexcused Absences)

A student is legally defined as habitually truant once they accumulate six (6) or more unexcused absences during the current school year. The legal steps WPSD and local districts must take depend on the student's age:

<u><i>Student Age</i></u>	<u><i>Legal Mandates & Procedures</i></u>
Under 15 Years Old	The school must refer the student to either a school/community-based attendance improvement program, OR the county Children and Youth Services (CYS) agency. Additionally, a legal citation may be filed against the parent/guardian in Magisterial District Court.
15 Years & Older	The school must refer the student to an attendance improvement program, OR file a legal citation against the student or parent/guardian in Magisterial District Court. If the student refuses to participate or continues to miss school after a program referral, they may then be referred to CYS.

Important Legal Note: Before any case can be escalated to Magisterial District Court or CYS, regardless of the student's age, WPSD must provide official verification that a formal Student Attendance Improvement Conference was successfully convened and held.

WPSD Partnership with Districts

WPSD works directly with your child's resident public school district when tracking habitual truancy. WPSD will file necessary reports with the county Children and Youth Agency (CYS), while the student's home district of residence will make the final determination regarding filing citations in Magisterial District Court.

Procedures for Reporting a School Absence

If your child will be absent, a parent or guardian must notify the attendance office via email before 9:00 AM on each day of the absence.

Please send your email to attendance@wpsd.org.

What to include in the email:

1. Student's full name
2. School department/grade level

3. Exact reason for the absence
4. Specific date(s) of the absence

Important Notices:

- Age Policy: Even if a student is 18 years of age or older, the email notification must still come directly from a parent or legal guardian.
- Final Approval: The department Principal retains the ultimate authority to determine the legitimacy of any submitted excuse and will officially categorize the absence as excused or unexcused. All excuses are kept on file in the student's permanent attendance record.

Make-up Work

Students who miss classwork or exams due to an excused absence are permitted to make up their work. The time allowed for make-up work is **equal to the number of days absent plus one additional day**.

Example: If a student misses **two days** of school, they will have a total of **three days** (two days plus one extra day) to complete and submit all missing work and exams upon their return.

Pre-Approved Absences

Students may be granted up to ***five (5) days of pre-approved absence per school year*** for pre-planned educational tours or trips. These approved days are counted as excused absences.

To request approval, please follow these steps:

1. Obtain the Request Form: Pick up the pre-planned travel form from the Principal's office.
2. Submit in Advance: The form must be signed by a parent or guardian and submitted to the Principal *prior* to the date(s) of the absence.
3. No Separate Excuse Needed: Because the form requires a parent/guardian signature, it serves as the official written excuse for the absence.

Note: Extensions beyond the standard five days are rare but may be granted on a limited basis at the discretion of the Principal, provided the additional absence serves a clear educational purpose.

Attendance Requirements for Extracurricular Activities

To participate in extracurricular, co-curricular, or weekend activities, students must meet specific school attendance requirements.

1. Weekend Activities and Tournaments

Students must attend school for at least one full school day prior to a weekend event or travel tournament.

- Example: If a team or group departs for a weekend trip after 12:00 PM on Friday, participating students must report to school by **11:30 AM on Thursday** at the latest.
- Exception: Students may be exempt from this rule if they provide an official doctor's note for a medical appointment.

2. After-School and Evening Activities

Students who miss more than half of the school day are not permitted to participate in after-school or evening activities on that day.

- Arrival Deadline: To participate in an evening activity, students must report to school by **11:30 AM** to attend their afternoon classes.
- Exceptions: This rule does not apply to school-sanctioned absences (such as educational field trips). Any other exceptions must be approved in advance by the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life or the Principal.

Unexcused Absences and Truancy

An unexcused absence occurs when a student misses school for a reason not permitted by law or school policy. Unexcused absences generally fall into three categories:

- Disallowed Absences: Missing school for reasons not approved by state compulsory attendance laws (such as missing school for a vacation without prior approval).
- Unexplained Absences: Any absence where a written excuse from a parent or guardian is not turned in to the school secretary within **five (5) days** of the student's return.
- Truancy: An absence where a student misses school without the knowledge or consent of their parent or guardian.

Pennsylvania Truancy Law Notice: Under Pennsylvania law, a student is legally considered "truant" once they accumulate **three (3) unexcused absences** within a single school year. WPSD is required to follow state guidelines to support families and improve attendance when this threshold is met.

Penalties for Unexcused Absences

The following consequences apply to unexcused absences and truancy:

- Grading and Make-Up Work: For each day of an unexcused absence or truancy, students are permitted to make up their missed work, but the maximum grade they can earn for those assignments is **75% of the total value**. Students are given the number of days missed plus one additional day to submit this work. Any work not completed within this timeframe will receive a grade of zero.

- *Intervention and Notification:* In cases of truancy, the school will immediately notify the parent or guardian and may request a conference to resolve the attendance issue. The student's home school district will also be notified at the same time.

Tardiness

Ensuring your child arrives at school on time is critical. Late arrivals cause students to miss valuable instruction and disrupt classes already in progress. Please note the following arrival windows:

- *Residential Students:* May return to campus on Sunday afternoons no earlier than **5:00 PM**, or on Monday mornings before classes resume at **8:00 AM**.
- *Day Students:* Should report to school Monday through Friday no earlier than **7:30 AM** and before classes begin at **8:00 AM**.
- *Weather Delays:* WPSD follows your local school district's announcements regarding weather-related delays. Tardiness due to an official school district delay is automatically approved.
- *Sign-In Procedure:* Any student arriving late to school must report directly to the Main Office (Room 141) upon arrival to sign in.

Early Dismissals

While we understand students may occasionally need to leave school early for medical appointments or family events, early departures impact attendance records:

Important Attendance Threshold: Students who are dismissed and leave school **earlier than 10:00 AM** will be marked absent for the full school day.

Parents/guardians should communicate with the student's department principal if they are leaving early. Students who leave early are not permitted to participate in athletics/extracurricular activities unless a medical note is provided (see "Participation in After School or Evening Activities" section above).

Cafeteria Accounts and Lunch Payments (Day Students)

WPSD utilizes **SchoolCafé**, a secure online management system, to handle lunch payments for day students.

- *How it Works:* Parents and guardians can deposit funds directly into their student's account online. Each time your child purchases a lunch, the cost is automatically deducted from their balance.
- *Account Features:* Through SchoolCafé, you can view your child's purchase history and set up automated low-balance alerts.
- *How to Access:* Visit www.schoolcafe.com or download the SchoolCafé mobile app.

Meal Costs and Fees

- *Standard Lunch:* \$3.20 per meal
- *Reduced-Cost Lunch:* \$0.40 per meal

- Processing Fee: Please note that SchoolCafé charges a **\$2.95 convenience fee** for each online deposit. To minimize these fees, we encourage families to deposit enough funds to cover a full month of meals at a time.
- Financial Assistance: Families are highly encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced Lunch Program application, which is available directly within the SchoolCafé platform.

Access to Student Records (FERPA)

In accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf strictly protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information within student educational records. This protection applies to the collection, storage, release, and destruction of all student data.

- Right to Inspect: Parents and guardians have the legal right to inspect, review, or copy any educational record relating to their child.
- How to Request: To review your child's records, please submit a written request to the school. WPSD will comply with all requests within **30 days**.
- Designated Representatives: Caregivers may authorize a designated representative to inspect, review, or copy the records on their behalf.

The complete policy regarding access to student records is available for review in the Principal's office.

Directory Information

WPSD may occasionally release "directory information" from a student's educational record without prior parental consent. This typically occurs when local media or newspapers request information to highlight a student's newsworthy achievements or honors.

- What is Included: Directory information includes the student's name, address, date/place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight/height of athletic team members, honor roll lists, dates of attendance, degrees/awards received, and the most recent educational institution attended.
- How to Opt-Out: Parents and guardians have the right to restrict the release of this information. To do so, you must submit a written opt-out request to the school at the beginning of each school year.

Campus Visits and Safety Guidelines

The welfare and safety of our students and faculty are our top priorities. To maintain a secure environment, all parents, guardians, alumni, and guests must observe the following guidelines:

- Staff Escorts: All visitors must be escorted by a WPSD staff member at all times while on campus.
- Main Campus Check-In: During regular school hours, all visitors must enter through the main entrance (located off the semicircular drive by the large white pillars). You must sign in at the front office using the ScholarChip Visitor Management System to receive a visitor's pass.
- Children's Center Check-In: Visitors to the Children's Center may enter through its main entrance (opposite the small gymnasium). If you are unfamiliar with this entrance, please use the main campus entrance instead.
- Classroom Observations: Observations must be scheduled with the Principal at least 48 hours in advance. Participation in any classroom activity is at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- Residence Visits: Parents and guardians of residential students are welcome and encouraged to visit. Upon entering the Residence, please immediately check in with a residential supervisor. Visits by individuals other than a parent or guardian after 6:00 PM must be approved in advance by the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life.
- Athletic Events: Visitors attending after-school sporting events held in the gymnasiums or on the playing fields are not required to sign in.

IEP Conferences and Meetings

Annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) conferences are held to develop a customized written plan for each student. This plan is collaboratively built by parents/guardians, teachers, Principals, the IEP Coordinator, and Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel (such as school district or Intermediate Unit staff).

- Collaboration: Your attendance is highly important, as all IEP decisions are made by team consensus. Meetings are offered both virtually and in person.
- Additional Conferences: You may request additional meetings throughout the school year at your convenience by contacting the Principal, who will coordinate the attendance of appropriate staff.
- School-Requested Meetings: Occasionally, the Principal or the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life may request a meeting with parents/guardians to resolve academic or residential challenges. Your participation in these meetings is vital to your child's progress.

Interpreting Services

WPSD provides a certified interpreter for meeting participants who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or communicate using a spoken language other than English.

- Please note that we cannot accommodate requests for specific, preferred interpreters.
- Parents and guardians are welcome to hire and bring an outside interpreter at their own expense if they prefer a specific professional.

Student Transportation

Each student's local school district is legally responsible for providing and managing transportation to and from WPSD, whether they use district vehicles or contract an outside company.

- Parent Responsibility: Parents and guardians should keep the name, phone number, and driver details handy. If a problem arises regarding your child's safety, welfare, or access to education during transit, contact your local school district liaison and the transportation company immediately.
- WPSD Records: WPSD must keep accurate transportation records for all day and residential students. Please ensure WPSD is updated with your child's current travel arrangements.
- Changes or Absences: If your child's route or company changes during the year, email the WPSD Transportation Office at dmazreku@wpsd.org. If your child will not be riding their usual bus on a specific day or week, you must notify both your transportation provider and the WPSD Transportation Office. Staff members are on duty daily to check students in upon arrival and out at departure.

Student Illness and Mental Health

Medical Dismissals

If a student becomes ill at school and is medically dismissed, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to arrange immediate transportation home.

Important Notice: Failing to pick up a medically dismissed student compromises their safety and wellbeing. Under Pennsylvania law, a failure to retrieve your child may be considered child abandonment and will result in an immediate report to Children and Youth Services (CYS).

Mental Health Emergencies

If a student is experiencing a severe mental health crisis and school professionals determine that they cannot safely remain on campus, parents or guardians must immediately transport the student home or to an appropriate care facility.

Important Notice: If a caregiver fails or refuses to pick up a student during a safety crisis, WPSD will file a report with CYS, and emergency services may be utilized to involuntarily commit the student to an appropriate psychiatric facility for their own protection.

Visiting Other Students' Homes & Off-Campus Trips

Off-Campus Day Trips

Parents and guardians who plan to take their own child off campus during school or Residence hours must arrange the departure through the Principal or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life.

- If you wish to take your child's friend along, written email permission from the friend's parent/guardian is required in advance.
- Medical and emergency information must be shared directly between the two families. WPSD is not responsible for transferring student medical details for private social outings.

Weekend and After-School Home Visits

If a student plans to visit or travel to a friend's home directly after school hours, WPSD requires strict, documented authorization from both families:

1. A written invitation from the host family.
2. Written permission from the visiting student's family.

Submission Policy: Both permissions must be signed, dated, and delivered to the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life or Principal. Verbal or phone permissions cannot be accepted. If the visit is for an entire weekend, written notifications must be submitted at least three (3) days in advance.

Additional Guest Guidelines:

- **Medication and Dietary Needs:** WPSD is not responsible for sharing medication schedules, medical history, or dietary restrictions with host families. It is the sole responsibility of the visiting student's parents to inform the host family of these needs. The host parents assume full responsibility for administering any required medications.
- **Bus Company Rules:** Many school district transportation companies do not permit guest riders on their vehicles. Parents must contact their respective transportation companies to verify policies and secure approval before any peer visitations.

Student Expenses and Financial Responsibilities

While tuition is free at WPSD, parents and guardians are responsible for specific personal and accidental expenses incurred by their student during the school year. These include:

- **Technology:** The cost of repairs or replacement for lost or damaged school-issued devices (Chromebooks, iPads) and their charging cords.
- **Learning Materials:** The cost to replace lost or damaged school textbooks and library books.
- **Property Damage:** Financial responsibility for any repairs or replacement of school property resulting from vandalism or negligence.

- Day Student Lunches: Day students are required to pay for school lunches unless they are officially approved for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Families will be provided instructions to set up an account on **SchoolCafé**, our secure, cashless lunch system.
⇒ Note: Residential students are not billed for school meals.

Important Policy Notice on Outstanding Balances: If a student has an outstanding fine or unpaid fee for lost/damaged property, their report card will be held at the end of the grading period, and they will be restricted from participating in all extracurricular and after-school activities until the balance is paid in full.



Academic Program

Bell Schedule

Elementary	
Breakfast	7:15-8:00
Period 1	8:00-8:42
Period 2	8:45-9:27
Period 3	9:30-10:12
Period 4	10:15-10:57
Period 5	11:00-11:27
Lunch	11:30-12:00
Period 6	12:03-1:00
Period 7	1:03-1:45
Period 8	1:48-2:30
Recess	2:33-3:00

Middle and High School	
Breakfast	7:15-8:00
Period 1	8:00-8:42
Period 2	8:45-9:27
Period 3	9:30-10:12
Period 4	10:15-10:57
Period 5	11:00-11:42
Lunch	11:45-12:15
Period 6	12:18-1:00
Period 7	1:03-1:45
Period 8	1:48-2:30
ISP	2:33-3:00

Grading Periods

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
August 24 - October 23	October 25 - January 22	January 25 - March 25	April 5- June 11
Midpoint check			
September 18	November 20	February 19	May 7

The Children's Center



Students in the Children's Center program range in age from three to six years. They participate in developmentally appropriate lessons and activities aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. The Children's Center emphasizes the development of ASL, English language, listening and spoken English skills.

The Children's Center staff includes Teachers of the Deaf, an ASL teacher, Speech and Language Pathologists, an Educational Audiologist, Counselor and specially trained paraprofessionals. These professionals work together to provide a rigorous program that is individualized to meet the needs of each child.

Educational Programming

At the Children's Center, the school day begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the day ends at 12:30 PM. Nap time for the youngest children, as well as recess for the older students, occurs after lunch each day.

Traditional Preschool Program

The Traditional Preschool program follows the Creative Curriculum, which is aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards. The Creative Curriculum encourages hands-on experiential learning where children learn through engaging in experimentation and play. The program incorporates developmentally appropriate practices which foster the development of foundational reading and mathematical skills. The educational team in each classroom uses language allocation strategies to foster the development of both American Sign Language and English.

The Children's House

The Children's House program is based on Montessori principles, which emphasize individualization, development of independence, social interaction, expression of thoughts, feelings and needs, motor development and thinking and reasoning. The Children's House is committed to the development of the whole child in a caring and nurturing environment. The goal is to provide an exceptional educational program that is built upon a foundation of best practices in early childhood education and listening and spoken language.

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians of the youngest children receive summaries of the day's activities every day from the classroom teacher. Parents/guardians of older children will receive information once each week. Teachers use digital platforms such as Alma, Google Classroom, and Talking Points to provide

information to caregivers. Parents/guardians are asked to reinforce concepts at home and to share news of family activities with teachers.

Progress Monitoring

Formal progress reports are sent to parents/guardians four times per year. These include developmental checklists as well as narrative summaries. Conferences may be scheduled at the request of the family or the teacher at any time throughout the school year. Parents/guardians who wish to arrange a classroom visit should contact their child's teacher or the Coordinator of the Children's Center in advance.

PBIS/ROARS

The Children's Center follows the school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in a way that is developmentally appropriate for our youngest learners. The Children's Center staff encourages positive behavior, including Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe (ROARS) during daily interactions, lessons, choice time, snack, recess, and independent work time. Behavior expectations are taught in a clear and consistent way through modeling, role play and incidental learning. The team works to help students learn to regulate emotions through language development and by fostering problem solving skills. Each classroom utilizes a classroom reward system to promote and encourage positive behavior.



Elementary School

The Elementary School includes students in grades 1 through 5. The school day begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the day ends at 12:30 PM.



The Elementary School staff includes Teachers of the Deaf, an ASL teacher, a Speech and Language Pathologist, an Educational Audiologist, and specially trained paraprofessionals.

The elementary school may implement a rotation for core subjects — ELA, Math, or Science/Social Studies. First-grade students continue to receive core instruction from their primary teacher. All students change classes for specials, which include Physical Education, STEAM/Technology, ASL, and Art.

Students use a variety of communication approaches, which may include amplification, communication devices, and visual instructional support in addition to the ASL.

Related services — Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Vision Instruction, and Orientation & Mobility support the program

Educational Programming

Academic

Academic instruction is aligned with the PA Common Core Standards. The curriculum includes English Language Arts (reading, grammar, and spelling), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The elementary school offers a curriculum that specifically addresses the individual learning needs of every student.

Life Skills

Students who require a greater level of instructional intervention, or who have significant learning needs, may be enrolled in the Life Skills program, which follows the Alternative PA Common Core Standards. The Life Skills program addresses grade-level content with greater modification, instruction, and individualized learning experiences.

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Regular communication with families is maintained through email and Talking Points. In addition to regular updates from the classroom teacher, parents and guardians receive a monthly, Instagram-style newsletter from the Principal.

- **Talking Points:** Utilized for quick, prompt responses and following up on emails.
- **Google Classroom:** Used to share updates and photos with families throughout the school year, as well as for tracking assignments in the older grades.

Progress Monitoring

Report cards provide parents and guardians with a detailed overview of a student's academic development and performance. Progress is formally reported four times per year. Students receive a digital, standards-based report card at the end of each quarter, alongside a midterm progress report halfway through the grading period. Grades reflect achievement in each subject area, as well as the development of positive social skills and work habits.

Report Cards

The Elementary School utilizes a grading scale as a communication tool to keep families informed of student growth in relation to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf elementary curriculum. For further details on the WPSD curriculum and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) standards, please visit wpsd.org/academics/curriculum.

Vocational Standards Grading Scale**	
O	Outstanding
G	Good
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory
I	Incomplete
N/A	Not Applicable



PBIS/ROARS

The Elementary Department promotes WPSD's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in three ways:

1. Tickets

Students earn reward tickets by displaying the characteristics of ROARS — Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, Safe. Any staff member at WPSD can give a student a ticket.

2. ROARS Bucks

Tickets are counted for ROARS Bucks, which students use to shop for prizes weekly through the ROARS store.

3. ROARS Celebrations

Students across the Elementary Department work together toward shared, department-wide goals to celebrate ROARS achievements as a community. ROARS/PBIS lessons are taught weekly in each area of the school — reinforcing what Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe look like in practice, and directly supporting students' progress toward the shared ROARS goal.

Middle School

The Middle School includes students in grades 6 through 8. The school day begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the day ends at 12:30 PM.

The Middle School staff includes Teachers of the Deaf, an ASL Teacher, Speech and Language Pathologists, an Educational Audiologist and specially trained paraprofessionals. The Middle School students change classes for each subject area, including elective courses. There are 8 periods in a school day. Students will have a teacher for each class period.



Educational Programming

Academic

Academic instruction is aligned with the PA Common Core Standards. The curriculum includes English Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Elective courses include Art, American Sign Language, IQ Robotics, Physical Education and Health.

Life Skills

Students who require a greater level of instructional intervention and/or who have significant learning needs are enrolled in the Life Skills program. The Life Skills program addresses grade level content with greater modification, life skills instruction, and individualized learning experience(s).

Homework

When necessary students who have difficulty completing homework will participate in Study Hall lunches and/or Study Hall ISP periods, as well as receive individual classroom teacher support.

A portion of a student's classroom grade is earned from submission of homework.

- Students will receive 100% of their earned homework credit when homework is turned in on time
- 75% of earned credit when it is turned in 1 day late
- 50% when 2 days late
- 25% when 3 days late
- 0% when 4 or more days late

In all situations, the teacher will email the Principal, Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life, and School Counselor by 3:00 the same day.

- First incident of late, incomplete or no homework: Students are prompted to complete.
- Second incident: Prompted to complete and parent/guardian contacted
- Third incident: Prompted to complete, parent/guardian contacted, study hall lunch, and letter home by the Principal

WPSD will conduct weekly grade checks, which will determine eligibility for participation in athletics and after school activities.

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Educators and parents/guardians maintain ongoing communication regarding student progress and needs. Caregivers may request meetings, telephone conferences or more frequent progress reports by contacting the School Office or their child's teacher. Staff will use digital platforms such as Alma, Google Classroom, and Talking Points to communicate with families on a regular basis.

Progress Monitoring

Report cards give parents/guardians and students a comprehensive picture of the student's progress and performance in the academic setting. Each student's progress is **reported four times a year**. Students receive a report card at the end of each quarter, as well as a midterm report (called a progress report) half way through each quarter. Grades reflect the student's progress in each subject area as well as the development of work characteristics and social skills.

Middle School students' grades are tabulated into a Grade Point Average (GPA). A student's GPA is calculated based on all of their classes. Students maintaining a GPA of 3.0 are placed on the Honor Roll. Those who maintain a GPA of 3.75 or better will be placed on the Distinguished Honor Roll. Middle School students attending classes off campus, with WPSD as their primary educational site, will have off campus grades calculated into their quarterly and overall grade point average.

Academic Grading Scale		
Numerical Grade	Letter	Grade Points
97-100	A+	4.00
92-96	A	4.00
90-91	A-	3.75
88-89	B+	3.25
82-87	B	3.00
80-81	B-	2.75
78-79	C+	2.25

72-77	C	2.00
70-71	C-	1.75
68-69	D+	1.25
62-67	D	1.00
60-61	D-	0.75
0-59	F	0.00

PBIS/ROARS

The Middle School department uses a system of positive rewards to promote positive student behaviors. The Middle School department follows school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) by teaching and reinforcing the following expectations to students: Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe (ROARS). For each class period, students earn points for demonstrating expected academic behaviors. The points are totaled and converted to "time earned". Students who earn enough "time" are able to participate in PBIS reward activities.

The Middle School Student Government and Middle School teachers plan and organize PBIS reinforcement activities. Please refer to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) within this handbook to view how behaviors are managed.

High School

The High School includes all students in grades 9 through 12. The school day begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the day ends at 12:30 PM. The High School students change classes for each subject area, including elective courses. There are periods in a school day.

The High School staff includes Teachers of the Deaf who have additional degrees in core content areas, ASL Teachers, Speech and Language Pathologists, and an Educational Audiologist.



8

Educational Programming

Academic

The academic program is aligned with Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned Systems (SAS). Students are required to take core content classes, which include English, Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students who are able to complete grade-level work will follow the Academic Course Progression, while students who do not perform at grade-level or need additional support to succeed in classrooms will follow the Foundations Course Progression. High School students must earn enough credits to graduate.

Career and Technical Education

High school sophomores, juniors, and seniors have the opportunity to attend an off campus career and technical education program. Students in this program must demonstrate a unique interest in a vocational area for which training is not provided by WPSD and must have a high likelihood of using these skills upon graduation.

[Forbes Road Career Technical Center](#) offers a variety of programs that will give students the academic, technical, and employability skills needed for postsecondary and workplace success. Classes at Forbes Road Career Technical Center gives students the ability to learn the skills needed in order to help obtain future employment.

Life Skills

The Life Skills Program works within the structure of the academic program to meet the needs of those students who benefit from hands-on learning, life skills training, or other specialized programming addressing their individual needs. The classes in this program include language arts, math, consumer economics, current events and communication. Life Skills-teachers use a functional and hands-on approach to learning. A student may have classes in both a Life Skills classroom(s) AND in academic classroom(s). Mixed Educational programming placements are made by the IEP team at IEP meetings teachers use a functional and hands-on approach to learning. A student may have classes in both a Life Skills classroom(s) AND in academic classroom(s). Mixed Educational programming placements are made by the IEP team at IEP meetings.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

Educators and parents/guardians maintain ongoing communications regarding student progress and needs. Parents/guardians may request meetings, telephone conferences or more frequent progress reports by contacting the school office or their child's teacher. Staff will use digital platforms such as Alma, Google Classroom, and Talking Points to communicate with families on a regular basis.

Graduation Requirements

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf requires that students earn 24 credits in grades 9-12 to obtain a high school diploma.

Graduation Requirements	
Credits	Subject
4	English
4	Mathematics
3	Science
3	Social Studies
2	Arts
1	Health/Physical Education
8	Electives - One elective must be in Career Education. - Electives can include courses at Forbes CTC
24	Total Credits

Graduation Pathways

ACT 158 of 2018 requires that, along with credit requirements set forth by the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, every student must satisfy one of the six graduation pathways outlined below to graduate and earn their diploma by demonstrating readiness for post-secondary success.

1. WPSD Credits and Keystone Proficiency

Proficient or Advanced score in Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exams

2. WPSD Credits and Keystone Composite

Achieve a total score of 4453 on the three Keystone exams (Calculated using the highest scores attained by the student). One score must be Proficient or Advanced and the other two scores should be at least Basic.

3. WPSD Credits and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator

Show meaningful engagement in a CTE program of study. If the Keystone pathway is not possible, fulfill WPSD's course requirements and provide evidence from the CTE pathway.

4. WPSD Credits and Alternative Assessment

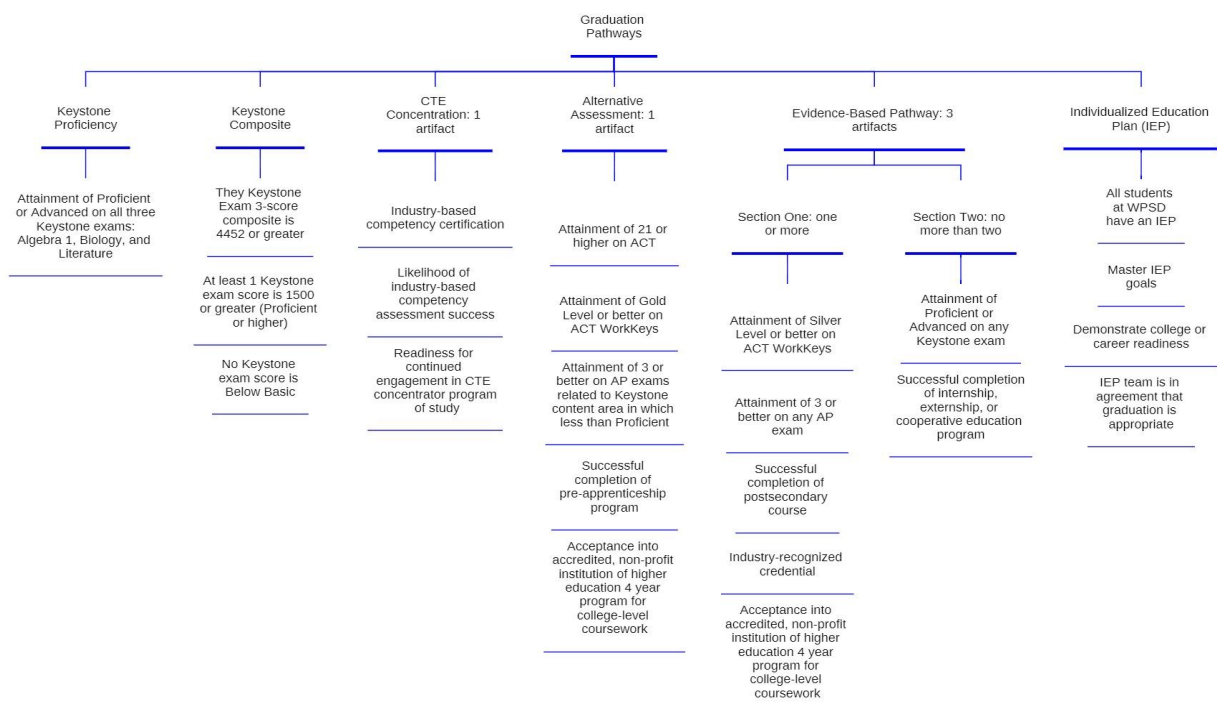
Show completed testing, coursework, and programming that demonstrate college and career readiness. Students should complete WPSD's course requirements and provide one piece of evidence from the Alternative Assessment Pathway, which includes ACT (score of 21 or higher) or CTE certification.

5. WPSD Credits and Evidence-Based Pathway

Provide three pieces of evidence aligned with the student's goals and career plans. Students should fulfill WPSD's course requirements and successfully complete a required career and college course during the senior year to complete an alternate portfolio of evidence that shows a future plan has been established.

6. WPSD Credits and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team Agreement

A student with a disability who is unable to satisfy pathway requirements but who satisfactorily completes a special education program is granted a diploma under Title 22 §4.24. This decision is made by the IEP team, with members of the team agreeing to grant a diploma.



Community Service

Students are required to complete 20 hours of community service for graduation. Students will be encouraged to achieve 5 hours per year of high school. Students are responsible to document any and all community service hours completed. Community service logs can be found in the high school counselor's office.

Valedictorian

As a tribute to high academic achievement and leadership ability, the honor of WPSD Valedictorian may be awarded yearly to a senior. The Valedictorian speaks at the graduation ceremony.

The WPSD Valedictorian must meet the following criteria:

- ACT score of 14 or higher
- Have the highest GPA in the graduating class.
- Participate in college preparatory courses or in a career technical education program at Forbes Road Career and Technology Center.
- Participate in two extracurricular clubs/activities during senior year
- Have no major disciplinary issues in 11th or 12th grades
- Have no more than 15 days of absences in any school year (grades 9-12) unless excused by a physician
- Be a student in good standing

Salutatorian

As a tribute to high academic achievement and leadership ability, the honor of WPSD Salutatorian may be awarded yearly to a senior. The Salutatorian speaks at the graduation ceremony.

- Have the second highest GPA in the graduating class.
- Participate in two extracurricular clubs/activities during senior year
- Have no major disciplinary issues in 11th or 12th grades
- Have no more than 15 days of absences in any school year (grades 9-12) unless excused by a physician
- Be a student in good standing

All valedictorian and salutatorian candidate qualifications will be reviewed by the Principal and Superintendent.

Dual Credit Courses

In collaboration with Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), and Carnegie Mellon University, high school students have the opportunity to take classes for college credit hours. Dual credit courses and advanced placement courses will be graded on a 5.0 GPA scale.

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is determined at the end of each nine-week marking period. Each student's grade point average is calculated using all the courses taken. Students must attain a 3.75 or better grade point average to earn Distinguished Honor Roll. Students must attain between a 3.50 and 3.74 average with no single grade lower than a "C-" to earn High Honor Roll. Students must attain between a 3.00 and 3.49 GPA to earn Honor Roll.

Progress Monitoring

Each student's progress is **formally reported four times a year**. Students receive a report card at the end of each quarter, as well as a Midterm report (called a progress report) half way through each quarter. The grading process combines number grades, letter grades and a quality point average.

High school students in Applied Studies classes are evaluated quarterly. The grading process combines number grades, letter grades and pass/fail grades for academic and vocational classes.

Academic Grading Scale		
Numerical Grade	Letter	Grade Points
97-100	A+	4.00
92-96	A	4.00
90-91	A-	3.75
88-89	B+	3.25
82-87	B	3.00
80-81	B-	2.75
78-79	C+	2.25
72-77	C	2.00
70-71	C-	1.75
68-69	D+	1.25
62-67	D	1.00
60-61	D-	0.75
0-59	F	0.00

Advanced Placement Grading Scale		
Numerical Grade	Letter	Grade Points
97-100	A+	5.00
92-96	A	5.00
90-91	A-	4.75
88-89	B+	4.25
82-87	B	4.00
80-81	B-	3.75
78-79	C+	3.25
72-77	C	3.00
70-71	C-	2.75
68-69	D+	2.25
62-67	D	2.00
60-61	D-	1.75
0-59	F	0.00

High School students attending classes off campus, with WPSD as their primary educational site, will have off campus grades calculated into their quarterly and overall grade point average.

Schedule Changes

Parents/guardians and students who wish to make changes to their course schedule must complete and submit a [course change request form](#). These course change request forms are due by the end of the first week of the first or second semesters. When schedule changes are completed, an official school schedule will be provided by the High School office.

Exams

Various tests are given to WPSD students each year. Teacher-developed, subject-related tests are the most common. Students at all levels also take standardized achievement tests and/or comprehensive tests in specific subject areas. Final or midterm exams are given to students in academic level courses at the end of each semester (January and June). The midterm/final exam is worth 10% of a student's class grade.

Class Organizations and Service Clubs

The Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior and Senior classes generally form class organizations for social and service purposes. There are also several service organizations including the Varsity Letter Club, Girls' Athletic Association, Residence Council, Student Body Government, and Jr. NAD. All class and service club activities must be cleared by the Coordinator of After School Programs, Principal, and Director of Student Life, well ahead of the scheduled date. Any changes in activities must be approved by these same people.

Each organization will conduct a minimum of one community service project per year. The community project can be on or off campus. The project must be approved by the Coordinator of After School Programs, Principal, and Director of Student Life.



Permission for all class and service club activities is given subject to the proper behavior and attitudes of the class and club members. Permission may be withdrawn and activities canceled at the discretion of the Coordinator of After School Programs, Principal, and Director of Student Life.

Each organization, program or club will be limited to two fundraising projects per year (Freshmen and Residence Council will be exempt from fundraising). All fundraising projects and exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Coordinator of After School Programs, Principal, and Director of Student Life.

The National Honor Society

The National Honor Society is a national organization recognizing high school students for their achievement in four areas: scholarship, character, leadership, and service. In order to be inducted into the National Honor Society, students should follow the guidelines below and be in 10th through 12th

grade. Induction will occur only once a year. Students and families will be invited to attend a formal induction ceremony.

Scholarship

- GPA of unweighted 3.5 or above (no rounding).

Character:

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously,
- constantly exemplifies desirable qualities of personality (cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, and stability),
- upholds principles of morality and ethics,
- cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, offices, hall, etc.
- demonstrates highest standards of honesty and reliability,
- shows courtesy, concern and respect for others, observes instructions and rules, punctuality and faithfulness in obligations both inside and outside of the classroom,
- has a power of concentration and sustained attention as shown by perseverance and application to studies,
- manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience of rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others, and
- actively helps to rid the school of bad influences or environment

NOTE: Discipline Code violations are taken into consideration under this section.

Service:

- Student must participate in two school related activities,
- be willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal school attitude,
- volunteers to support the mission and vision of the school and organization,
- is willing to take on difficult or inconspicuous responsibilities,
- is willing to render any requested service to the school with enthusiasm,
- is willing to represent the school in interclass and interscholastic competition,
- is willing to be engaged in committee work,
- shows courtesy by assisting visitors, staff, and peers,
- and provides valuable services to the school.

Leadership:

- is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles, and making suggestions,
- demonstrates leadership in promoting school activities. Exercised influence on peers in upholding school ideals,
- contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school,

- is able to delegate responsibilities,
- exemplifies positive qualities,
- inspires positive behavior in others,
- demonstrates academic initiative,
- successfully holds school offices or positions of responsibility, conducts business efficiently and effectively, and is reliable and dependable without prodding,
- demonstrates leadership in the classroom and in school activities,
- is thoroughly dependable in any responsibility that is accepted,
- students must be nominated by at least one faculty member for leadership.

Transition Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines transition as “a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within an outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including educational services, adult educational services, independent living and community participation.”

WPSD offers a variety of transition activities which include: career presentations, Disability Mentoring Day, job shadowing, on-the-job-training, Pennsylvania Career Guide, summer employment, work experience, Work Training Center, workshop transition, college admission tests, tours, parent/guardian information packets to junior and senior parents/guardians, graduation portfolio, Bridges/CHOICES web-based programs for career planning.

In Pennsylvania, transition activities start at age 14. Prior to the IEP meeting, parents/guardians will receive a list of resources available in their home county. Parents/guardians should review the list and feel free to ask questions about any of the programs. As the student nears graduation, additional service providers will be invited to the IEP meeting to assure a coordinated planning effort. For more information on transition activities or services, please see the Transition section of the WPSD website.

Additional Programming

High School Summer Reading Program

All high school students are expected to participate in a Summer Reading Program. Students are required to read two books that are chosen with the help of their reading teacher. This program is worth 10% of the first 9-week grading period.

All School Science Fair

All students taking science classes are required to participate in an annual Science Fair. The student's project is worth 5% of the grade of the 9-week grading period in which it occurs.

Accelerated Reading (AR) Program

All 1st through 12th grade students take part in the Accelerated Reading Program. This program is part of the student's reading class and provides the wonderful opportunity to gain a better appreciation of literature.

Homework

As part of the PBIS program, the High School Counselor will be collecting data on the completion of homework.

When necessary, students who have difficulty completing homework will participate in Study Hall lunches and/or Study Hall ISP periods, as well as receive individual classroom teacher support.

A portion of a student's classroom grade is earned from submission of homework.

- Students will receive 100% of their earned homework credit when homework is turned in on time
- 75% of earned credit when it is turned in 1 day late
- 50% when 2 days late
- 25% when 3 days late
- 0% when 4 or more days late



In all situations, the teacher will email the Principal, Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life, and School Counselor by 3:00 the same day.

- First incident of late, incomplete or no homework: Students are prompted to complete.
- Second incident: Prompted to complete and parent/guardian contacted
- Third incident: Prompted to complete, parent/guardian contacted, study hall lunch, and letter home by the Principal

WPSD will conduct weekly grade checks, which will determine eligibility for participation in athletics and after school activities.

PBIS/ROARS

Recognition Tickets for [Expected](#) Behaviors

At the individual student level:

- WPSD staff acknowledges appropriate, expected student behaviors in terms of being Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe (ROARS) using positive reinforcement with specific verbal/signed praise.
- WPSD staff also acknowledges appropriate, expected student ROARS behaviors with ROARS RECOGNITION TICKETS.
- Tickets are given to teachers by the counselor and these tickets are given to students by the teachers who recognize them for ROARS behaviors.
- The students turn these tickets into the counselor, which then goes into a raffle box. The students receive recognition in various ways when they submit this ticket.

At the classroom level:

- The High School Behavior Matrix is posted in each classroom.
- The Teacher/staff teach the *ROARS School-Wide Behavioral Expectations* (Hallway, Cafeteria, Meeting/Common Areas, assemblies, and bathroom) AND *ROARS Classroom Expectations* within the first week of school and throughout the school year.

At the school level:

- The High School School-Wide Behavior Matrix is posted throughout the school. (hallway, cafeteria, meeting/common Areas, assemblies, and bathroom)
- In the beginning of each semester there will be a review of the ROARS matrix with the High School expectations.
- At the end of the nine weeks, there is a High School Assembly. At that time, students on Honor Roll, as well as those who have received ROARS recognition tickets, are recognized in various ways.
- ROARS Matrices and Thinking Maps are placed in specific locations for the students and staff to see the ROARS expectations.



Counseling & Evaluation Department



The Counseling and Evaluation Department consists of a School Psychologist, three school counselors, and one behavior specialist. Members of the Counseling and Evaluation Department are all members of the school's Crisis Response Team.

The Counseling and Evaluation Team (CE) helps the students succeed academically, social-emotionally, and behaviorally. The CE Team collaborates with educators, parents/guardians, and other professionals to create a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students that strengthens connections between home, school, and dorm. The CE Team can also assist students with career and transition needs.

The Counseling and Evaluation team members are highly trained in the fields of mental health, child development, social-emotional development, school organization, learning styles and processes, behavior, motivation, and effective teaching. They work to find the best solution for each student and situation and use different

strategies to address student needs and to improve school support systems. The CE Team works with students individually and in groups. They develop programs to train teachers and parents/guardians regarding effective teaching and learning strategies, and effective techniques to manage behavior at home, in the dorm, and in the classroom.

The Counseling and Evaluation Department provides the following services:

Consultation

- Collaborate with teachers, parents/guardians, residential staff, and administrators to find effective solutions to learning and behavior problems
- Strengthen working relationships between teachers, parents/guardians, residential staff, and service providers in the community
- Work with the Child Student Team to develop supports for Students
 - Collect behavioral data for Data Team meetings and facilitate discussion regarding follow-up for the student.

Evaluation

- Evaluate eligibility for special services
- Assess academic skills and aptitude for learning

- Determine social-emotional development and help other outside qualified professionals determine mental health status
- Evaluate learning environments

Intervention

- Provide counseling to apply academic achievement strategies
- Provide counseling to manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- Provide counseling to plan for postsecondary options (higher education, military, work force)
- Provide opportunities for academic, career, and personal counseling and/or to assist families to find appropriate resources if needed.
- Participate in the IEP process when necessary

Prevention

- Design programs for children at risk of failing at school
- Promote tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity within the school community
- Develop programs to make schools safer and more effective learning environments
- Collaborate with school staff and community agencies to provide services directed at improving emotional and physical health
- Develop partnerships with parents/guardians and teachers to promote healthy school environments

Research and Planning

- Evaluate the effectiveness of academic and behavior management programs
- Identify and implement programs and strategies to improve schools
- Use evidence-based research to develop and/or recommend effective interventions

Post-Secondary Education Counseling

Guidance and evaluation services are provided to students who are nearing completion of studies at WPSD. WPSD has a School Counselor and Transitional Staff who provide each student with information about job opportunities; vocational, technical and trade schools; colleges and junior colleges; and employment. These teachers work with students and parents/guardians to assist in the application process. It is important for parents/guardians to maintain communication with the High School Counselor throughout the application and post-secondary placement process.

WPSD maintains copies of all pertinent documents that a student needs as they transition into a new placement. Ultimately, however, the student and parents/guardians are primarily responsible for correctly completing application forms for college or vocational school admission and for financial aid. Services included but not limited to:

- Facilitate and supervise ACT testing at WPSD
- Collect and disseminate information about employment opportunities
- Provide orientation for training opportunities at Forbes Road CTC
- Monitor students attending Forbes Road CTC
- Host college, technical school presentations to provide opportunities for students to meet and speak with admissions counselors and recruiting personnel
- Provide scholarship information to interested students
- Process student applications to appropriate post-secondary institutions, when appropriate

Suicidal Behavior Reporting Procedures

(see www.wpsd.org for full WPSD Suicide Prevention and Postvention Policy)

Suicidal and/or self-injurious behavior includes a student threatening to hurt himself/herself, talking about suicide, or demonstrating severe self-abusive behavior or other extreme behavior. A psychologist, counselor, and/or an administrator will screen the student and make the appropriate recommendations. The Director of Student Life or Principal will contact the student's family and inform all necessary staff. A family member will be required to come and pick up the student and provide follow up as recommended. The school psychologist and/or counselor will contact the Superintendent, Executive Director, the Health Center, and Principal with information.

During School Hours

In the event of suicidal and/or self-injurious behavior, the psychologist, counselor, and/or an administrator will screen the student and make the appropriate recommendations regarding the student remaining at school or going home. The psychologist and/or counselor will present information and provide recommendations to the Superintendent, Health Center and Principal immediately following the screening. The student's parents or guardians will be contacted with next steps.

Off Campus Threat

At Home - If a parent/guardian reports a student making a harmful threat at home, staff should refer the parent/guardian to a local Mental Health program or to a local hospital that has a psychiatric unit.

At an Off Campus School Event

If a student makes a threat at an off campus school event, the staff will keep the student under constant supervision. In addition, the Superintendent, the Director of Student Life, and Principal should be notified. The information they receive should be shared with the WPSD psychologist or counselor, who can provide immediate feedback for the staff and student involved. If the child is deemed safe to return to campus, the psychologist or counselor will meet the student upon the trip's return. If the student is considered at immediate risk, an ambulance will be summoned to transport the student to the nearest medical facility. A staff person will accompany the student in crisis in the ambulance. The counselor will meet them at the selected medical facility.



Residential Program

Students aged 6 through 21 who live more than an hour away from the WPSD campus, are eligible to live in the Residence. Residential students stay on campus throughout the week. They arrive Sundays no earlier than 5 PM and return home Friday afternoon. The residential students are grouped into “pods” based on their age and gender. Each pod has a ratio of 1 staff to 4 students for elementary, 1 staff to 8 students for middle and high school.

Residential Schedule	
Arrival	Sunday evening at/after 5:00pm
Wake Up	6:30 AM
Breakfast	7:20 AM
School Begins	8:00 AM
School Dismissal	3:00 PM
After School Activities	3:30 PM - 9:30 PM
Dinner (M-Th)	5:45 PM - 6:15 PM
Dinner (Sun)	6:00 PM

Academic Supports - Learning Center (offered after School)	
Elementary	Time it takes to complete homework
Middle School	30 minutes
High School	1 hour
Bedtime	
Elementary	9:00 PM
Middle School	9:30 PM
High School	10:30 PM
Seniors/PFS	11:00 PM
Bluelight release time - one hour before scheduled bedtime	

Weekly Needs

Students should be properly outfitted for school. Since residential students spend four or five nights per week at the school, care should be taken to send sufficient clothing with them each week. Below are some examples of what students can bring for a week at the Residence. **Please do not send valuable toys, watches or other articles to school**

Clothing:

- 7 outfits (including gym clothes)
- 8 pairs of underwear
- 6 pairs of socks
- 8 undershirts
- 2 pairs of pajamas (without feet)
- 1 bathrobe
- 1 pair slippers
- 1 pair of school shoes
- 1 pair of play shoes

Toiletries:

- Shampoo
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hair brush and comb (hair ribbons or barrettes)
- 1 plastic soap dish and 1 bar of soap
- Sandals/flip flops for shower

Seasonal Clothing:

- pair of boots (for snow)
- lightweight jacket and hat
- winter coat and hat
- snowsuit, hat, mittens

Special Events:

- dressy outfit (dress, tie, button down shirt)

Bedroom:

- Laundry Bag
- Pillow

Mark all clothing and toys sent to school with your child's name

Residential Advisors

Residential advisors are actively involved with helping students become mature, responsible and independent. They supervise all after-school-based activities as well as plan and implement the evening dorm activities. Pod supervisors prompt students to complete chores, homework, and daily hygiene tasks. The goal is to develop independent living skills in each student. Overnight residential supervisors provide support to ensure their safety and well-being.

PBIS/ROARS in the Residential Program

The Residential Program uses a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework aligned with the WPSD ROARS expectations to create a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all students.

Students are explicitly taught residential expectations and are recognized for demonstrating positive behaviors, making responsible choices, and contributing to the residential community. Staff provide consistent encouragement, positive feedback, and opportunities for students to earn recognition through the PBIS system.

The Residential PBIS program emphasizes:

- Learning and practicing positive behaviors.
- Building responsibility, independence, and self-advocacy.
- Creating safe, respectful, and inclusive learning in a residential community.
- Recognizing and celebrating student success.
- Using restorative conversations and problem solving strategies to help students learn from mistakes and positive choices.

Students may earn PBIS recognition, acknowledgements, and incentives for consistently demonstrating the ROARS expectations and meeting residential responsibilities. When behavioral concerns arise, staff work collaboratively with students to reteach expectations, provide appropriate supports, and develop strategies for future success.

The goal of PBIS is to help every student develop social, behavioral, and independent living skills needed to be successful both in the residential program and beyond. WPSD Residential Advisors promote a positive residential community by recognizing and reinforcing students who demonstrate ROARS behaviors—being Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe. Advisors use specific verbal and signed praise to acknowledge students' positive choices, encourage continued success, and strengthen expected behaviors within the residence.

WPSD Residential Advisors recognize and reinforce students who demonstrate appropriate, expected ROARS behaviors by awarding ROARS Recognition Tickets.

Students submit their ROARS Recognition Tickets to the Assistant Director of Student Life. These tickets are used to celebrate and reinforce positive behavior through a variety of incentives and recognition

opportunities. Reinforcement may include prizes, special trips or activities, privileges such as bed delay or phone delay, Snack Bar Cash, and other positive rewards that encourage students to continue demonstrating expected ROARS behaviors.

The following are residential student expectations. Examples may include, but are not restricted to:

Ready 1 ticket	Organized 1 ticket	Accountable 1 ticket	Respectful 1 ticket	Safe 1 ticket
Being on time Completing daily chores Completing homework Brushing teeth Combing hair Using deodorant Showering daily Following directions Dressing appropriately for school	Completing tasks/assignments given Keeping room clean & unpacking clothes	Taking medications to the Health Center and attending appointments on time Signing in and out Not borrowing or loaning personal items Using manners (everywhere) Following directions Being in appropriate areas at all times	Accepting decisions Cooperating (with staff & students) Talking nicely/appropriately, no swearing Displaying appropriate public displays of affection Listening and following directions Using manners Being honest, nice and having a positive attitude (No lying/teasing/insulting/gossiping)	Not displaying threatening behavior Not possessing anything dangerous or illegal Playing nicely/no horse play Being in appropriate areas at all times

After School Programs

A wide array of activities is offered every day after school. For the younger students, WPSD offers Mighty Mites sports, Esports, vocational clubs and more. These activities complement classroom learning with fun hands-on activities. Older students can participate in a variety of Middle School, Junior Varsity and Varsity sports, vocational clubs, drama productions and more.

Residential students who consistently demonstrate ROARS expectations may earn opportunities to participate in off-campus field trips and community outings, such as captioned movies, dining out, and special events.

Peer Mentors

Each year, a group of 10th, 11th and 12th grade students is selected to become Peer Mentors. Up to 10 students are selected for this position. The students who are chosen to become peer mentors must be responsible, dependable, display leadership skills and maintain good grades. They are frequently asked to help in various residence and school occasions as the need arises. Interested students apply for this position by submitting an application and two written references. In addition, each applicant must complete an interview with a committee consisting of the Assistant Director of Student Life (ADSL) and the Director of Student Life (DSL)..

Intramurals

There is a large gym, playground, and the Alumni Pavilion for students to use after school. From time to time, there are tournaments in ping pong, pool, etc. Games are also available in the Lions' Den and dormitories for students to enjoy.

Academic Eligibility and Study Hall Requirements

Students are expected to maintain passing grades in all full-credit courses, or the equivalent, to remain eligible for participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Student grades are reviewed every Friday to monitor academic progress and provide timely support. Any student earning below 60% in any class will be required to participate in academic intervention, which may include Study Hall, Reflective Lunch, and/or one-on-one tutoring until academic performance improves.

If, during the weekly grade review conducted each Friday, a student is not meeting the required passing standard, the student will be academically ineligible beginning the following Monday and continuing through the Sunday after the next Friday. Eligibility will be reviewed each Friday and will be reinstated for the following week once the student meets the required passing standard during the weekly review.

Required Study Hall

As part of the ROARS framework, students are encouraged to demonstrate responsibility by maintaining academic progress. Weekly grade checks identify students who may benefit from additional support. Students who do not meet the weekly academic standard are required to attend study hall (high school: one hour; middle school: 45 minutes, Monday through Thursday). Students who meet the weekly academic standard are not required to attend study hall. Optional study time is available after the required session and on Sunday evenings to support continued growth and success.

Academic Review for Suspensions

Any proposed short-term or long-term suspension from extracurricular activities due to academic

concerns will require a review meeting involving the Superintendent, Principal, Director of Student Life, and After School Programs Coordinator before a final decision is made.

Request for Tutoring

The school faculty makes every effort to assure the success of each student. Students who need additional teacher support are often tutored by their teacher during lunchtime or after school. A limited number of volunteers may be available after school and in the evenings to work with students who demonstrate specific difficulties in class. **The student and parents/guardians must complete and sign a Request for Assistance Form.** The student is responsible for obtaining the teacher's signature indicating the need for tutoring. Students must follow the attendance guidelines on the form or their tutoring privileges will be suspended or canceled. Please note that tutoring is not a mandatory service provided by the school.

Lion's Den

The Lion's Den is an informal meeting place for young people to get together in a relaxed atmosphere. It has a snack bar that sells items such as soft drinks, pizza, french fries, ice cream and hamburgers. It has a game room, complete with ping pong, air hockey, shuffleboard, darts, and foosball tables. It has two large screen TVs, one for video games and the other for watching sports. It even has a dance floor.

Residential Students have the opportunity to visit the Lions' Den two times per week. **Residential students generally need \$10 per week to attend the Lions' Den.** Students who consistently demonstrate the ROARS expectations can earn ROARS recognition tickets. Once students earn the required number of tickets, they become eligible to enjoy the privilege of visiting the Lion's Den as a reward for their positive behavior and engagement.

Academic Success and Lion's Den Eligibility

Students are expected to demonstrate both positive behavior and academic responsibility. Students who do not meet the weekly academic eligibility standard will use Lion's Den time for academic support and grade improvement. Eligibility is reviewed weekly, and Lion's Den privileges are reinstated once the required academic standard is met. The Director of Student Life and Assistant Director of Student Life monitor eligibility.

Part-Time Employment

A limited number of part-time jobs are available for residential students. Applications are available from the Director of Student Life, Assistant Director of Student Life, or the Principal.

To remain eligible for employment, students must demonstrate the ROARS expectations (Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe) and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Linen Services

There are laundry machines in the residence. Students are responsible for seeing that their clothes are removed promptly from the machines. School-owned bedspreads, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, towels and washcloths are available. **Students must change their own linens once a week.**

Students are permitted to bring linens from home. Students may prefer to sleep with their own comforter or blankets. If a student brings linens from home, they are asked to take the linens home every two weeks to wash.

Mail

Mail is distributed daily by the residential advisors on duty.

Student Bank

The Student Bank allows residential students to keep cash in a safe place. Deposits are made Sunday evening (upon arrival). Cash withdrawals can be made prior to going to the Lion's Den, a field trip, or ordering food delivery, and any time in case of emergency.

The Student Bank is optional. But, the students are **strongly urged** to keep their money in the Student Bank as the school cannot be responsible for missing money that has not been deposited in the bank. Students are NOT encouraged to bring large amounts of cash to school. Additional funds may only be necessary for field trips. Parents/guardians will be notified of field trip plans one week ahead of time.

Telephones & Video Phones

School-owned telephones and video phones (VP's) are available for students to use in each Residential pod. However, many students have their own smartphones and choose to use it to call or text their family members. Students are permitted to use school phones or their own phones/watches between 3:00 PM and 1 hour prior to their pod's bedtime. (8:30pm for Middle School, 10:30pm for High School, and 11:00pm for ILP & Seniors).

Sleeping is very important for everyone and we believe that quality sleep will produce positive results and performance in school and after school activities. We want to ensure that our students get adequate sleep. Moreover, we have sufficient research that everyone needs down time which means we have to put away our phones, tablets, video games and the like (blue lights) one hour before bedtime.

The Independent Living Program

The Independent Living Program provides students with a safe, supportive residential experience that prepares them for success after high school. Since 2003, the program has offered students the opportunity to live on campus from Sunday evening through Friday afternoon while developing the skills needed to become confident, independent adults.

Students learn and practice the WPSD ROARS expectations by being Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe in their daily routines, relationships, and community experiences. Through a communication-rich environment, students build independence, strengthen self-advocacy and communication skills, develop positive social relationships, and gain confidence in making responsible decisions.

Program Goals

The Independent Living Program helps students:

- Practice the ROARS expectations in everyday life.
- Build independent living skills, including personal care, meal preparation, laundry, time management, and household responsibilities.
- Develop communication, self-advocacy, and problem-solving skills.
- Strengthen responsibility, decision-making, and self-confidence.
- Build healthy relationships and positive social skills.
- Prepare for college, employment, vocational training, and independent living.

The goal is to help every student become a responsible, confident, and independent member of their family, workplace, and community.

Prep for Success (PFS) Program

The Prep for Success (PFS) Program is a post-secondary transition program designed for eligible students who have completed their graduation requirements but would benefit from an additional year of instruction and real-world experiences before exiting school.

The program focuses on helping students apply the ROARS expectations while developing the skills needed for employment, post-secondary education, and independent adult living.

Program Overview

Students enrolled in the Prep for Success Program may live in the Independent Living residence,

where they experience increased independence while continuing to receive guidance and support from residential staff.

Throughout the program, students are expected to demonstrate the ROARS expectations by being:

Ready to learn, work, and participate.

Organized in managing schedules, responsibilities, and personal belongings.

Accountable for their choices, work performance, and personal goals.

Respectful toward themselves, others, and the community.

Safe in all residential, workplace, school, and community settings.

Planning for participation begins during a student's senior year. Students work collaboratively with their parents or guardians, teachers, transition staff, school counselor, residential staff, administrators, and the IEP team to determine eligibility and develop an individualized transition plan.

Students who choose to participate in the Prep for Success Program delay receiving their diploma and remain enrolled at WPSD for one additional year to receive transition services.

Eligibility Requirements

Students may be considered for the Prep for Success Program if they:

- Are 18–21 years of age.
- Have completed WPSD graduation requirements.
- Can independently perform activities of daily living.
- Consistently demonstrate the ROARS expectations and are prepared for increased independence.
- Can benefit from the services offered through the program.
- Have an employment plan or obtain employment during the school year.
- Are flexible with work schedules and job placements.
- Receive approval from the IEP team, including the student, parent/guardian, school district, and WPSD administration.
- Program Highlights

Students receive individualized instruction and support in:

- Independent living skills
- Career exploration and employment
- Workplace readiness
- Financial literacy and budgeting
- Self-advocacy and communication
- Community access and transportation
- Health and wellness

- Social and interpersonal skills
- Recreation and community engagement
- Transition planning and family collaboration

By participating in the Prep for Success Program, students strengthen the knowledge, confidence, and independence needed to achieve their personal goals while demonstrating the ROARS expectations in school, at work, and in the community

Residential Cell Phone and Personal Communication Use

Personal communication devices are a privilege that support students in staying connected with family and friends while demonstrating ROARS expectations—being Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful, and Safe.

To help create a positive residential community:

- Students and parents/guardians must sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) before personal communication devices may be used in the residence.
- Students are expected to label their devices and chargers with their name.
- Students may not share or lend personal communication devices to others.
- WPSD is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal communication devices.

Students are expected to use technology respectfully and responsibly. Photos or videos may only be taken with the permission of everyone being photographed or recorded. Unauthorized photos or recordings may result in temporary loss of device privileges and additional restorative or disciplinary Interventions.

To promote safety, privacy, and engagement, personal communication devices may not be used:

- In the dining room during meals.
- In bathrooms or shower areas.
- During athletic practices or competitions unless approved by the coach.
- To contact staff members on their personal phones.

If a student's use of a personal communication device interferes with learning, safety, privacy, or the residential community, phone privileges may be temporarily limited as part of a PBIS intervention plan. Privileges are restored as students demonstrate consistent ROARS expectations.

Responding to Inappropriate Device Use

When expectations are not met, staff will teach, remind, and reinforce appropriate technology use while using progressive interventions to help students be successful.

- First Incident: Reminder and reteaching of expectations.
- Second Incident: Temporary loss of phone privileges for up to 24 hours.
- Third Incident: Temporary loss of phone privileges for up to 3 days, including a restorative conversation and review of expectations.
- Repeated or Significant Incidents: An individualized behavior support plan and additional interventions may be developed by the Director of Student Life or designee.

The goal of these interventions is to help students develop responsible digital citizenship while maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive residential community.

Day Students in the Residence

There are times when a day student may participate in a residential after school activity. First, they must have parent/guardian permission. A written note from parents/guardians indicating their permission, how late the student may stay and how the student will return home is necessary before the student will be permitted to stay after school.

***If a day student visits in the Residence,
they are expected to follow all residential rules***





The Athletic Program

Boys Sports	Girls Sports
Varsity Soccer	Jr.Varsity & Varsity Volleyball
Jr.Varsity & Varsity Basketball	Jr. Varsity & Varsity Basketball
Varsity Track and Field	Varsity Track and Field
Cheerleading	Cheerleading
Esports	Esports
Boys' Volleyball	Girls' Flag Football

Students must maintain good grades and demonstrate proper classroom and residential behavior in order to participate in team sports. A letter from each coach will be sent home at the start of each respective season with some forms including a physical examination to be performed by your family physician. The student-athlete must be cleared to participate and **the WPSD Health Center must have the appropriate forms before any athlete can participate in practices and games.**

If a student is suspended in or out of school, sports participation is suspended for the length of the suspension. Serious infractions or repeated misbehavior can result in removal from the team.

Mighty Mites

Elementary School students are able to participate in intramural sports teams. Mighty Mites is for students in 1st grade through 5th grade. Sports teams follow the typical season. Fall includes soccer. Winter includes basketball and cheerleading. The Spring intramural season introduces the mighty mites to a variety of games, including kickball, track, pickleball, and flag football.



Attendance/Participation

If a student arrives at school later than 11:30 AM the day of a game, the student may not participate in a sporting event. Team/squad members cannot participate in a game if they are absent from school without a doctor's excuse or other acceptable excuse. The coaches require a student to practice the day before a game in order to play the day of the event. Exceptions to this rule may be granted by the department Principal or Coordinator of After School Programs.

Athletic Grading Policy

Education is the primary focus at WPSD. Students must maintain satisfactory academic standing to participate in athletics. Weekly grade checks will be conducted on Friday afternoons at 2:00 PM to determine athletic eligibility. Students must be passing all classes with a minimum grade of 60% or higher. Eligibility is based on cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period, is reported weekly, and must be filed in the Principal's office. If a student's cumulative work does not meet the required standards as of any Friday, the student will be ineligible from the following Monday through the Sunday immediately after the next Friday on which the student's cumulative work meets the standards. Student-athletes will not be permitted to wear uniforms for home games or travel to away games during ineligible periods. Academic performance will continue to be monitored weekly, and appropriate support and interventions will be provided as needed. Students will still be required to participate in practices and be with the team during home games.

Eligibility for participation in sports is also subject based on behavioral issues or misconduct as determined by the Superintendent, Principal, Director of Student Life, and the Coordinator of After School Programs.

Any student that earns a 2.0 Grade Point Average (or below) at the end of any nine-week grading period will immediately be put on academic probation for **three (3) weeks**. Student-athletes will not be able to dress in uniform for home athletic games or travel to away games until the fifth week of the new quarter. Students will still be permitted to participate in practices and sit with the team during home games.

Any proposed short- or long-term suspension would necessitate a review meeting with the Superintendent, the Principal, the Director of Student Student Life, and the Coordinator of After School Programs.

Student Concussion Policy

In accordance with state law:

1. A student desiring to participate in any athletic activity and the student's parent/guardian or guardian shall, each school year, sign and return to the school an acknowledgment of their receipt and review of concussion and traumatic brain injury information.
2. All medical personnel, authorized to make decisions on when the student athlete can return to play, must complete, or have completed, training in the evaluation and management of concussion. Material for this training is available on-line through the Pennsylvania Departments of Education or Health (www.state.pa.us) and through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov).
3. Authority is granted to game officials, the coach, athletic trainer, licensed physician, licensed physical therapist or other individual trained in the recognition of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and designated by the school, to determine that a student athlete exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion or traumatic brain injury.
4. Once the student athlete has exhibited signs or symptoms of a concussion/traumatic brain injury, the student must be removed by the coach from participation. The student athlete cannot return to practice or play until the student is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional (as defined in the Safety in Youth Sports Act) with training in the evaluation and management of concussion.



Policy on Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms

In accordance with state law:

- A student desiring to participate in any athletic activity and the student's parent/guardian or guardian shall, each school year, sign and return to the school an acknowledgment of their receipt and review of warning signs information sheet.
- Authority is granted to game officials, the coach, athletic trainer, licensed physician, licensed physical therapist or other individual trained in recognizing the warning signs and symptoms to determine that a student athlete exhibits signs of sudden cardiac arrest.

- Once the student athlete has exhibited any warning sign, the student must be removed from the activity. The student athlete cannot return to practice or play until cleared for return in writing by an appropriate medical professional.



Medical Services

Students who are ill, hurt, or require treatment and/or medications, are treated by the nursing/medical staff. The Health Center is staffed by nurses licensed in the state of PA, a contracted physician, a contracted dentist, and is supported by outside agencies including The Mobile Dentist and Vision to Learn vision services.

Students with significant medical needs may require 1:1 nursing/medical services to access their school program. The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf **does not provide 1:1 nursing/medical services**. In cases where 1:1 services are needed, the local educational agency is responsible for ensuring the nurse/medical services are provided as a related service.

WPSD Health Center

School Year Hours: Sunday: 5:00 PM – Friday: 2:00 PM

Summer Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Phone #: 412-244-4212

Text #: 814-513-6598

VP #: 570-309-0112

Fax#: 412-244-4291

Email: healthcenter@wpsd.org

Students who are sent home from school must remain home until they have met the criteria for return as outlined in the Programs of WPSD illness policy. This policy is shared under the “when to keep your child home” section of this document. It is not the responsibility of WPSD or district transportation to transport a sick child home, regardless of distance. It is the parents responsibility to have an emergency plan in place to pick up their child from school should their condition require this.

Students who become ill at school may be sent home by the doctor or nurse and are to remain home until criteria for return are met

Extended Illness

Students who have been out of school due to an extended illness, inpatient psychiatric treatment, hospitalization, serious injury, surgery, and/or are under doctor's care must **return with a written release from their health care provider**. Any minor surgery, diagnostic medical testing, or dental work requiring sedation-anesthesia requires a 24 hour stay at home or a physician's note to return before that timeframe.

Please provide the Health Center with any instructions and restrictions, and a release to return to school. This can be faxed to 412-244-4291. Please verify that this information has been received by the health center prior to your student returning to school.

When a student requires extended medical treatment, the parent/guardian is responsible to make necessary arrangements for any follow-up appointments, testing, and/or treatments (i.e. physical therapy). The Health Center will notify the appropriate departments should there be any restrictions to school-based activities. An updated physician's note will be needed to resume activities after a restriction has been placed.

Some illnesses and injuries are reportable by law

The Pennsylvania State Health Department and/or The Allegheny County Health Department require WPSD staff to notify and provide contact information for specific cases. A list of reportable events can be found on the [Department of Health website](#).

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, the Health Center staff is notified immediately. If the student is unable to come to the Health Center, a nurse will respond to the scene to administer emergency intervention(s). Prior to, and upon the arrival of the school nurse, emergency use of glucose, Narcan, Albuterol, or epinephrine auto-injector may be used if indicated per physician standing orders, policy, and training.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code, Section 1414.2(g) allows parents/guardians to request an exemption to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector for their student. To request this exemption, contact the school nurse to discuss this decision, review, and sign the opt-out form.

The Health Center staff is trained to determine if emergency treatment at a hospital is necessary. In the event that a student requires emergency treatment or evaluation by a healthcare provider outside of WPSD, the parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as possible. If the situation requires further

emergency response, “911” will be called. AEDs (automated external defibrillators) are strategically placed at various locations around campus for emergency use.

Health Forms

It is the parent/guardian responsibility to ensure that all health center forms are completed and returned prior to the start of school. A Consent and Authorization for Medical Treatment form MUST be completed at the start of each year, and will be a part of your annual electronic enrollment “packet”. Your student may be excluded from school until this form is completed and returned. This includes record of immunizations and physical exams, medical consent, medication administration orders, and referral follow up. Any serious accidents, illnesses, or hospitalizations that occur while your child is at home on weekends, holidays, or for the summer must be shared with the Health Center staff upon return to school. Additional documentation may be requested.

Medications

All medications (prescription, over the counter, and supplements) require a physician's order to be administered at school. Medications will NOT be administered without a current order from the physician to administer. Orders can be faxed, before the start of school or anytime throughout the year, to 412-244-4291. **Medications must be sent to school in original labeled packaging.** Further information regarding medication administration in the health center can be found within the medication section of this document.

Ongoing Treatment

The health center staff is available to discuss any questions or concerns regarding immunization requirements or other health conditions and treatments (ie. seizure action plans, diabetes management, asthma, allergies, behavior concerns, and medications). Failure to provide adequate medical documentation to maintain the safety of your student may require they stay home until such documentation can be provided. The school physician has the responsibility over all aspects of students’ medical conditions while they are in attendance at the school. The physician is available on call for acute and emergency situations via phone/video consult.

The school physician is NOT to be expected to act as the students’ primary care physician

Health Center Services

Mandated Screenings

Each year, state mandated screenings are completed and results will be shared with parents/guardians via email or postal mailing. These screenings include growth screenings, vision screenings, scoliosis screenings, physical and dental exams. Any results not within normal limits will be shared in a timely manner with parents/guardians. It is important to note that these are screenings and do not replace the need for comprehensive evaluations by your students' healthcare providers.

Growth screening enables school health professionals to: Monitor growth and development patterns of students, identify students who may be at nutritional risk or who may have a common nutritional problem, notify parents/guardians of screening results with a recommendation to share findings with the student's health care provider for further evaluation and intervention, if necessary.

Vision screening program is to identify students with visual impairments. "Vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers and one in four school-age children" (Prevent Blindness America, 2000). Visual problems can and do affect the educational, social and emotional development of children. Early detection of vision problems assures the child of the opportunity of taking the best advantage of their educational opportunities. We work with a local organization, Vision to Learn, that assists us in identifying vision impairments and provides glasses free of charge to students requiring them. Parents are given the opportunity to opt out of services beyond the non-invasive screening.

Scoliosis screening shall be administered to students in grade six and grade seven and to age-appropriate students in ungraded classes. Students who have completed a 6th grade physical or who are diagnosed as having scoliosis do not need rescreened.

Dental exams are required for Kindergarten, 3rd, and 7th grade. Dental screenings will be completed annually by the school contracted dentist. This is an opt out service and reminders will be sent home prior to the date scheduled. Additional services are available to qualified students through our partnership with the Mobile Dentist, providing consent is obtained and forms completed. The mobile Dentist is scheduled to visit WPSD in September and ??

Physical exams can be completed by the school contracted physician at no cost to the student. The physician will complete outstanding and annual/sports physicals in June of the current school year. At this time, they will also evaluate illness and injuries referred by the health center staff, and prescribe necessary treatment and followup. Please note that immunizations will **not** be administered at school or during physical exams by the school physician.

Immunizations

WPSD is responsible for maintaining current student immunization records and ensuring students in attendance meet all state requirements. These requirements outlined below are set by the PA department of health. Students who do not have the required immunizations must do ONE of the following or risk exclusion:

- complete immunizations
- submit a signed exemption
- have at least 1 dose of each AND submit and comply with a medical plan from their physician

In the event of exclusion, days are considered unexcused and subject to truancy requirements. Students who do not have at least 1 dose of a vaccination series will not be permitted to attend the first day of school.

K-12 Requirements

Students must have the following vaccinations by the 5th day of school or the student will risk exclusion. If the student is not up to date, they must have at least 1 dose of each, and a medical plan from a physician, OR a signed exemption in place by 5th day of school.

- 4 doses of tdap (1 dose on or after 4th dose)
- 4 doses of Polio (1 dose on or after 4th dose and > 6 months from previous dose)
- 2 doses of MMR (1st dose on or AFTER 1st birthday)
- 2 doses of varicella (1st dose on or AFTER 1st birthday)
 - If given separately from MMR, must be 28 days AFTER last dose
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B (3rd dose after 6 months of age)

Covid Vaccine series (INCLUDING Booster) and an annual Influenza Vaccine is recommended but not required.

7th Grade

Students entering 7th grade must have these vaccinations or a signed exemption prior to the first day of school or the student will be unable to attend the first day of school and will be excluded.

In the event of exclusion, days are considered unexcused and subject to truancy requirements.

- 1 dose of tdap
- 1 dose of MCV (meningitis vaccine)

12th Grade

Students entering 12th grade must have the following vaccine, a signed exemption or a medical plan from their physician by the 5th day or will risk exclusion.

In the event of exclusion, days are considered unexcused and subject to truancy requirements.

- 2nd dose of MCV (Unless first dose was given AFTER age 16)

Covid Vaccine

The Covid vaccine is currently not a requirement for students K-12. Vaccination status may impact isolation and quarantine requirements regarding future guidance from the CDC. Please provide documentation if your student is immunized against Covid19. Please note: ages 5-21 require 3 doses (2 primary and 1 booster) to be considered up to date.

***If you have submitted an exemption for immunization of your student,
and an outbreak occurs within the school or community,
your student will be excluded per the regulations of the health department***

Preschool Requirements

Students attending preschool must obtain ALL recommended immunizations. If parents/guardians choose to not complete all of the following vaccinations, they may submit a signed letter of exemption.

- 3 doses of hepatitis B (3rd dose after 6 months of age)
- 3 doses of Rotavirus vaccine
- 4 doses of dtap (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis/whooping cough) (dose required after 4th birthday for entrance into kindergarten)
- 4 doses of Hib (Hemophilus influenzae type b)
- 4 doses of PCV 13 (Pneumococcal)
- 3 doses of Polio (4th dose required after 4th birthday for entrance into Kindergarten)
- Annual Influenza vaccination (record due to health center by December 1st each year)
- 1 dose of MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)
 - Given on or after 1st birthday (2nd dose due after 4th birthday or entrance into Kindergarten)
- 1 dose of Varicella (Chicken Pox) - or evidence of disease
 - Given on or after 1st birthday (2nd dose due after 4th birthday or entrance into Kindergarten)
 - If given separately from MMR, there must be 28 days between MMR and Varicella doses)
- 2 doses of Hepatitis A

**Vaccination requirements can be complicated and confusing.
Please reach out to the health center staff to discuss your student's
immunization status if you have any questions or concerns.**

Medication

Medication administration must adhere to state law and comply with the regulations of nursing practice. Per Pennsylvania Department of Education, medications can only be administered by a licensed provider or a parent/guardian. As a result all medication needs must be communicated promptly to health center staff. Please notify the Health Center if you give your student any medication at home.

For field trips and/or sports trips that occur outside of normal school hours, medications administration orders will be required for those medications to be administered. See further for guidance on administration for trips. Please keep the Health Center staff well informed about your student's health and medication needs.

Any medication sent in requires a physician's order which provides instruction to the nurse for administration of medication. This includes prescription medications, over the counter medications, topical creams, eye drops, and other supplements. New prescription orders are needed at the beginning of every school year, and with any changes in medications throughout the school year. Please notify the Health Center immediately if a prescription changes or is discontinued and provide an accompanying order to reflect changes or discontinuation. The Physician's Request for Medication Administration form should also be signed by the parents/ guardians. A copy of this form is located in the back of the handbook for your convenience.

***All student medications
MUST be stored in the Health Center
and are not permitted to be kept on the students person****

Any medication brought to school by a student must be turned in to the Health Center immediately upon ARRIVAL to school. Always send any prescriptions and/or medications in the original container(s). DO NOT send medicines in baggies, jars or old unmarked prescription bottles. You should request an extra labeled bottle from your pharmacy for prescription medication for medications given during school hours.

Residential students should pack their medication in their stowed suitcase. The expectation for day students is that medications are transported by an adult to the school and handed off to another adult. Medications should not be placed in a student's backpack for transportation to school. Please reach out as soon as possible to discuss with the health center if there are barriers regarding medication transportation that you would like to discuss.

When sending in medication which is taken on a long term, ongoing, daily, or other basis, please send enough for the month. Medications will **not** be sent home weekly, unless condition warrants. If the medication is to be taken on a temporary basis, be sure to send enough for the week. Always include a note or call the Health Center stating the time the last dose was given.

***Students are not permitted to carry or self administer any medications**, except for those defined by state law and with physician's written order. Students with written permission to carry and self administer medication must demonstrate understanding of proper storage and administration to the health center staff. Any misuse of medications will result in students losing privilege to self administer medications regardless of physician order. Parents/Guardians, the student, and school administration will be notified if this occurs.

Some medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, antihistamines, etc. may be administered per standing orders obtained from the school physician. Consent for such items is outlined on the required Consent and Authorization for Medical Treatment form. If you would like to review the physician standing orders or rescind consent to any of the standing orders, please submit in writing to the health center or email us at healthcenter@wpsd.org.

When possible, the school nurse will administer the medication before or following any off campus outing(s). If dosing times cannot be adjusted to permit on-campus administration, the school may request a parent/guardian to accompany the student and administer the medications. If the

parent/guardian is not available to attend, other arrangements will be made for nursing staff to administer the medications, as per state laws and regulations.

The Health Center will send home medication reminder letters in a student's suitcase/backpack and via email when medication needs to be refilled.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to check the student's suitcase for any medication, medication bottles, and notes that are sent home from the Health Center.

If a parent/guardian arranges for their student to visit another student's home for the weekend, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to communicate their health/medication needs. WPSD health center staff will NOT package and dispense medications for such situations.

***If your child travels with the sports teams,
or if student plans to stay in the residence overnight,
all of the above rules apply***

Student Illness Policy (Rev. 05/12/2026)

In order to keep the students at WPSD/SSDHHC healthy, we ask for your partnership to screen your student for symptoms daily before school and *utilize the symptom checklist to determine if your child should stay home from school*. To maintain a safe mask-optional environment successfully we require your diligent adherence to this policy.

Please note that if community transmission rates increase, as a school, we may decide to resume masking requirements until numbers return to a safe, decreased level.

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted by the health center and must activate your family emergency plan, to pick up your student. WPSD and the home school district will not transport students with illness home.

All medical forms and test results should be submitted to the Health Center before returning to school.

Symptoms/Illness

If your student is experiencing any of the following symptoms, please keep them home and follow the procedure for reporting absences.

If your student develops symptoms while at school the school nurse will contact you and you will need to activate your emergency family plan for your student to be picked up from school.

- Any communicable disease (e.g., chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis)
 - For MOST communicable diseases, return to school will be determined on a case by case basis, after communication with the health center and PA DOH guidelines.

- Illnesses with specific school guidelines are referenced throughout this policy (strep throat, pink eye, respiratory illness)
- Fever (>100.4 F) –
 - your student may return to school when student has been fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT the use of Tylenol or ibuprofen
 - If the student also has respiratory symptoms, we ask that they mask for 5 days from symptom onset. If they have a confirmed positive test for covid, influenza, and/or RSV, masking is required. (Please read further for additional guidance)
- Vomiting - 2 or more episodes of vomiting in the past 6 hours.
- Diarrhea (**multiple episodes of loose/liquid stool, or inability to control continence**) within 24 hours prior to school.
- Strep throat - confirmed diagnosis. Can return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics AND fever free x 24 hours.
- Inflammation and/or discharge of the eye(s), concerning for bacterial conjunctivitis. - Clearance from a health care professional and if indicated by medical provided, 2 doses of antibiotic eye drops prior to returning to school.

If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, please keep them home and follow the procedure for reporting absences. If your child develops these symptoms while at school, they will be provided a mask to wear and you *may* need to make arrangements for them to go home. These are symptoms of Respiratory Illness (COVID19, Influenza, RSV). If you have concerns as to whether your child should remain at home. Contact the health center nurses and a decision will be made. For the next step, please refer to the [WPSD/SSDHHC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines](#) outlined below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper/lower respiratory infection • Cough • Congestion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny Nose • Sore Throat • Chills, rigors (uncontrollable shaking) • Fatigue (not related to lack of sleep) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache (please communicate with health center if/when you have medicated your student for Headache) • Pain (e.g., stomachache, earache, or sore throat) - keep your student at home until the pain subsides. • Suspicious rash - keep your student at home until the rash has resolved or is evaluated and cleared by a healthcare provider. | |

Certain health concerns may require a medical release to return to school. Please contact the health center at WPSD/SSDHHC with any questions or concerns.

WPSD/SSDHHC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

PLEASE communicate illnesses with the school nurses to verify dates of quarantine, and ensure all criteria have been met to return to school.

While the Programs of WPSD remain a mask optional setting, there are certain circumstances that will continue to require strict mask compliance. If your student is unable to maintain proper mask wearing during their isolation and comply with respiratory etiquette, they may be required to complete this time at home.

*****Face shields are not a viable option in these scenarios.**

- **Confirmed/Suspected Respiratory Illness (Covid19, Influenza, RSV, etc.):**

If you are experiencing symptoms, you should remain home

- Students can return to school when...
 - Fever free x24 hours without the use of tylenol or ibuprofen.

AND

- Symptoms are improving, the student is feeling better.
 - Mask should be maintained for 5 days from onset of symptoms (symptom onset is considered day zero)
 - If at any time during the quarantine period symptoms get worse, students should remain at/return to home.
 - If your student is UNABLE to maintain respiratory etiquette while at school and/or wear a well-fitting mask , they may be asked to isolate at home until completely recovered.

REFERENCES

Pennsylvania Department of Health - <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health/programs/school-health>.

Centers for Disease Control www.CDC.gov

Notice of Changes

Please note that these policies may change as information from the local health department is received. All updates and changes will be communicated to staff, students, and parents/guardians upon notice.

Health Insurance

Please attach a copy of your child's insurance card to the Consent for Medical Treatment form.

If your child's health insurance provider changes during the school year, please notify the Health Center immediately and send a copy of the new insurance card to WPSD. The school must have this information for emergency medical care.

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to verify insurance coverage for out of state sports and field trips/sports trips.

Asthma Management

- It is important that you talk to your healthcare provider to discuss what treatments are appropriate for your student's asthma management.
- Use of nebulizer treatments are currently not recommended in the school setting due to the possibility of aerosolizing viruses.
 - Albuterol nebulizer treatments will remain available as part of treatment for emergency situations.
- Please talk to your healthcare provider about providing the following for asthma management during school hours:
 - Metered dose inhaler with spacer should be considered as the preferred medication delivery device.

ALL inhalers must be kept in the health center or with staff on trips unless your student's physician has specifically written an order indicating that they can carry and student has demonstrated they can utilize their own emergency inhaler independently.

Misuse/improper use of inhaler will result in student no longer being permitted to self-carry inhaler regardless of physician order.

- Please provide your student's supplies - inhaler and spacer, along with a physician's signed medication order and physician's signed Asthma Action Plan, to the school Health Center.

The physician or nursing staff will determine if the student should return to school or go home.

If your child does not feel well enough to participate in the educational setting, please keep him/her at home.

Bed Bugs

If you suspect your child has been in contact with bed bugs please notify the nursing staff of your concern.

If a bed bug is found on the student's belongings, the student will be discreetly removed from the classroom so that the school nurse can examine the student's clothing and other belongings.

If a confirmed bed bug is found on a student, the school Principal or nurse will contact the student's parent/guardian to inform them of the bed bug presence on their child. They will be provided with clean clothes and may be required to change clothes daily until infestation is resolved.

Educational materials will be provided to the family.

Students will not be excluded from school due to bed bugs unless repeated efforts have been made to remedy an infestation.

The Principal can discuss with the family the procedure for school attendance.

For more information on bed bugs contact your local health department.

Lice

Lice is a common problem among school age children. Please remember to check your child's head periodically and prior to starting school. Head scratching and complaints of itchy scalp are good indications of head lice.

Do not send your child to school if student has active head lice until they have been treated

If your child has head lice, treat your child and notify the nurse at the Health Center. In accordance with PA Department of Health regulations, students found to have live lice will be sent home at the end of the day. Parents/guardians will be contacted with instructions and education on how to treat the student and the home environment. Students can be readmitted to school immediately following the first treatment. Recurrent lice infestations may require referral to outside resources.

Infestations within the residence may require more restrictions for return. The WPSD Health Center is available for discussion regarding any concern for lice in a residential student.

Scabies

Students who are identified as having scabies will be excluded from school immediately and cannot return until treatment is completed.

Physicals

Sports Physicals

Students participating in WPSD athletics (K-12) must have a PIAA sports physical completed on or after May 1st of the previous year, and submitted to the health center prior to starting practice. They will not be allowed to participate until the appropriate forms have been submitted. A sports physical must be completed AFTER May 1st or it will NOT be accepted. A copy of the exam should be sent to the Health Center. Recertification of physicals before each sport is not currently required, unless your child has had a major injury or illness during the school year.

During Kindergarten/1st, 6th and 11th grade, this physical will meet the state requirement for physical exams. Additional forms(PIAA CIPPE forms) will be required of the parent to accompany this physical to meet the athletic requirements.

A current Consent and Authorization for Medical treatment must also be on file to participate.

Yearly Physical

The Health Center encourages parents/guardians to maintain wellness care with their primary physician on an annual basis. If a student is participating in athletics at WPSD, an annual physical is required (see above for more specific details). Please share these exams with the health center so we continue to provide appropriate care and treatment for your student.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code Section 1402. Health Services (e) **requires** that students upon entry to **Kindergarten, 6th** grade and **11th** grade have a physical exam completed and submitted to the school. Section 1402(c) requires the completion of medical questionnaires, completed by the student and/or parents/guardians which are to become part of the student's health record.

This requirement may be completed by the student's primary care provider (MD, DO, CRNP, PA) or by the school provider. **Immunizations will NOT be provided during a school provider physical.**

Schools may accept exams on the private physician's own form as long as it is comparable to the DOH approved form.

Expenses That Will Be Billed to Parents/Guardians

1. Medical attention and examinations performed outside the school, such as emergency room and follow-up care.
2. Dental work performed outside the school in case of emergency.
3. The Mobile Dentist will bill insurance if parents have consented to participation in this program. This is a third party program that WPSD has partnered with but services are not completed by WPSD staff. More information available at <https://mobiledentists.com/>
4. Vision to Learn provides vision evaluations, and if indicated eye glasses to all students every two years. They do submit claims to vision insurance as able but will never bill a parent/student regardless of how many times glasses need replaced for glasses that are damaged/lost. This is a third party program and all insurance questions should be directed to them. More information available at Visiontolearn.org

Services That Will Not Be Charged to Parents/Guardians

1. Routine state-mandated dental screening for students Kdg/1st, 3rd, and 7th grade.
 - a. If you opt in to supplemental third-party services like the mobile dentist, your dental insurance will be utilized. Insurance coverage may impact services available per their policy
2. Routine state-mandated eye screening every year for all students.
 - a. If you opt in to supplemental third-party services like the Vision to Learn Program, your insurance will be utilized per their policy. If coverage is not available, this will not impact their ability to participate and utilize these services
3. Routine state-mandated scoliosis screening for students in 6th and 7th grade..
4. Routine state-mandated physicals offered for Kdg/1st, 6th, and 11th grade students, as well as annual sports physicals to those participating in WPSD athletics. (parents must complete forms and sign up to participate)



Student Code of Conduct

School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an approach used to promote school safety and good behavior. WPSD will teach students behavioral expectations as well as strategies to achieve those expectations. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment.

Consistent school and residential expectations are key for PBIS success. Students will be acknowledged when they follow expected behaviors. Staff will review school rules and expectations to encourage successful behavior. WPSD's PBIS program is called "ROARS", which is an acronym for **Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful and Safe.**

For more general information about PBIS:

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-pbis>

*Each department has an age-appropriate PBIS system in place
for the developmental level of its students*

Characteristics of ROARS:

The system is based upon a three-tiered model:

- **Tier one** is a system of support to ALL students. It emphasizes preventive practices that teach and reinforce **expected** student behaviors.
- **Tier two** provides targeted interventions to support students classified as “at risk.” Tier 2 students require more intervention than is typically provided within tier one universal support.
- **Tier three** is a system of support for students with significant behavioral/emotional support needs. A plan for intensive interventions will be put in place for students who meet the criteria.

Intervention Strategies commonly used in PBIS are:

- differentiated instructional practices
- improved instructional delivery
- consistent, nonpunitive discipline practices
- opportunities to learn prosocial and self-management skills
- consistent, clear rules and high-performance expectations
- consistent enforcement of rules

Procedure for Managing Behaviors

Staff Managed Behaviors (Minor Incidents)

If a student's behavior is managed in the classroom or by the residential staff in the residence it is considered a Minor Incident. It is the Teacher/staff responsibility to use strategies when addressing behaviors.

Office Referrals

Staff members may refer a student to an office referral when a student has violated the behavior code despite teacher interventions. Administration is contacted immediately regarding the behavior.



T-Chart of Behaviors

Staff Managed Behaviors (Minor)	Office Referral Behaviors (Major)
Defiance/Non-Compliance	Abusive language
Disrespectful comments/behaviors	Arson
Disruption (low level)	Bomb threat/False alarm
Dress code Violation	Bullying
Food, drink, gum in the classroom without permission	Disruptive behavior (high level)
Horseplay	Eloping
Leaving class without permission	Fight/Altercation (physical)
Leaving items in an unsafe place	Forgery
Lying (low level)	Harassment
Not following routine/appointment	Lying (high level)
Not ready for class	Out of bounds area
Plagiarism/cheating (low level)	Physical aggression
Profanity	Plagiarism/Cheating (high level)
Public displays of affection (low level)	Property damage/Vandalism
Sleeping	Public display of affection (high level)
Tardiness without a pass	Self-injury
Technology violation (low level)	Skippping class
Throwing items (low level)	Technology violation (high level)
Usage of personal phone during school hours without permission	Theft
	Threats to school/person
	Throwing items (high level)
	Use of tobacco/drugs/vape pens
	Use of weapons

Consequences for Student Choices

Students are accountable for their choices and for adhering to the Student Code of Conduct described in this handbook. Consequences for infractions, such as Reflective Lunch or suspension, may be applied based on the student's conduct.

The building administrators shall have the authority to assign discipline to students, subject to the policies, rules, and regulations of the district and to the student's due process right to notice, hearing, and appeal.

Teaching staff and other district employees responsible for students shall have the authority to take reasonable actions necessary to control the conduct of students in all situations and in all places where student are within the jurisdiction of the Administrative Team, and when such conflict interferes with the educational program of the schools or threatens the health and safety of others.

Repeated infractions may result in an increased level of consequences.

Reflective Lunch

Students who are assigned reflective lunches will eat lunch with a teacher, counselor, or administrator. The purpose of reflective lunches is to provide students with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their behavior. This provides students and staff an opportunity to work together to establish alternative choices regarding behaviors.

- Teacher/Staff Reflective Lunch are assigned by the teachers or staff for disruption to the school process and will typically serve during the student's lunch period. Reflective Lunch at WPSD can require a student to complete academic work, read quietly or complete reflection documents.
- Office Reflective Lunch may be assigned for more serious disruptions. The same process will occur.

Reflective Lunch Rules

- Students must report to Reflective Lunch on time. Tardiness is not permitted.
- Students in Reflective Lunch may not communicate with each other in any fashion.
- Students cannot sleep during Reflective Lunch.
- Students must remain in Reflective Lunch for the duration of the period.
- Students will sit in assigned seats.

Students who do not comply with Reflective Lunch rules must report to the Principal. Further time may be assigned if rules are not followed.

Parent/Guardian Notification of Reflective Lunch

Parents/guardians will receive a letter each time their child receives a Reflective Lunch. The letter will include the date(s) of the student infraction(s), the teacher(s) who assigned the student the Reflective Lunch, and the date the Reflective Lunch was served. The letter will be sent out no more than one day after serving Reflective Lunch. Parents/guardians may request immediate notification of Reflective Lunch in writing to the Principal of the student's department. The Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Support Services, and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life may assign Reflective Lunch at their discretion.

Procedures for Suspension

The following steps apply to **in-school or out-of-school suspension from 1 to 10 days**.

- WPSD notifies the local school district (this refers to the student's school district of residence). The student's school district is responsible for final approval on suspensions or expulsions.
- If suspension is to proceed, the school district or parent/guardian will make appropriate arrangements for the student's transportation home if necessary.
- Students receiving in-school or out-of-school suspension will receive credit for any work completed during that time. The student will be given assignments in order to keep pace with the rest of the class. Work not completed will be given zeros.

The following procedures apply to expulsion or **suspension for more than 10 days**. Such suspensions are considered to be changes in placement under special education.

- WPSD contacts the local school district and informs officials of the circumstances.
- A process is initiated for reevaluation, IEP review and placement recommendation if the school district concurs with WPSD's recommendation. In cases where the school district does not agree with WPSD's recommendation, proceed to Sec. C below.
- School district provides a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) to the parent/guardian regarding the proposed action and of the right of the parent/guardian to request a hearing.
- No expulsion, or change in placement will occur until approval is received from the parent/guardian, student's school district, hearing officer and/or the Bureau of Special Education. In emergency situations, the school district may request approval for an emergency change in placement. Such requests must be in writing.

When a disagreement arises as to the need for expulsion or an emergency change in educational placement

- WPSD and the school district will proceed as follows.
- WPSD requests, in writing, the Bureau of Special Education approval for an emergency change in placement.

- The written request will include a description of the reasons the behavior constitutes grounds for immediate exclusion.
- WPSD will simultaneously send a copy of this written request to the parent/guardian and the local school district.

In-School Suspension

The student assigned in-school suspension continues to work on IEP goals and objectives away from the classroom. The decision to place a child in this area is the joint decision of the staff involved and administration. School districts and parents/guardians are notified regarding the child's placement in this area and the duration of the assignment.

Children with cognitive challenges cannot be removed from their prescribed (IEP) placement without permission from the state.

Mandated Reporting

By law, when a school employee has a reasonable cause to suspect a child has suffered any physical, sexual, or mental abuse or neglect, staff is required to report their suspicions to the local children and youth services agency. An investigation is conducted by that agency.

WPSD personnel are sensitive to parent/guardian concerns when making any report of suspected child abuse. We make every effort to maintain communication without jeopardizing the welfare of the student, family, or the investigation itself.

For students over age 18 who have mental or physical impairment, The Department of Aging will be contacted, pursuant to Act 70 of 2010.

Bullying/Harassment

WPSD recognizes its responsibility to establish and maintain a safe educational climate and a residential living environment free from harassment and bullying. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, WPSD prohibits bullying by all students.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING: mean unwelcome, repeated, and systematic harassment and attacks on others by means of verbal, written, electronic or physical conduct.

Bullying can take many forms and can include many different behaviors such as:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs
3. Emotional bullying/cyberbullying: (ie: spreading rumors, ridiculing, manipulation social relationships)
4. Threats and intimidation (including social media)
5. Extortion or stealing

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying. School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school. A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as “the electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person, often done anonymously”. For many children, the internet plays a huge role in their social life. Cyberbullying is similar to other types of bullying except that it takes place online or through text messaging. Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as children who are bullied in person, such as a drop in grades or low self-esteem.

According to the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, cyberbullying can include:

- Sending cruel, vicious or threatening emails.
- Creating Web sites that have stories, pictures and jokes ridiculing others.
- Posting pictures of other students/kids online with derogatory phrases or questions attached to them.
- Using someone else's email address to send vicious or incriminating emails to others.
- Using instant messaging tools to harass others.

Cyberbullying is included under H.B. 1067, 2008: 24 Pennsylvania Statutes §1303.1-A. This bill requires all school systems in Pennsylvania to establish policies prohibiting bullying.

All bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment violations will be thoroughly investigated by the Principal, Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life and/or Superintendent. If substantiated, the appropriate disciplinary action(s) as indicated in the [Code of Conduct](#), will be enforced. Students who have been bullied or who have bullied others are provided with support in the school through the counseling department and all staff to promote respect for others, accountability and safety.

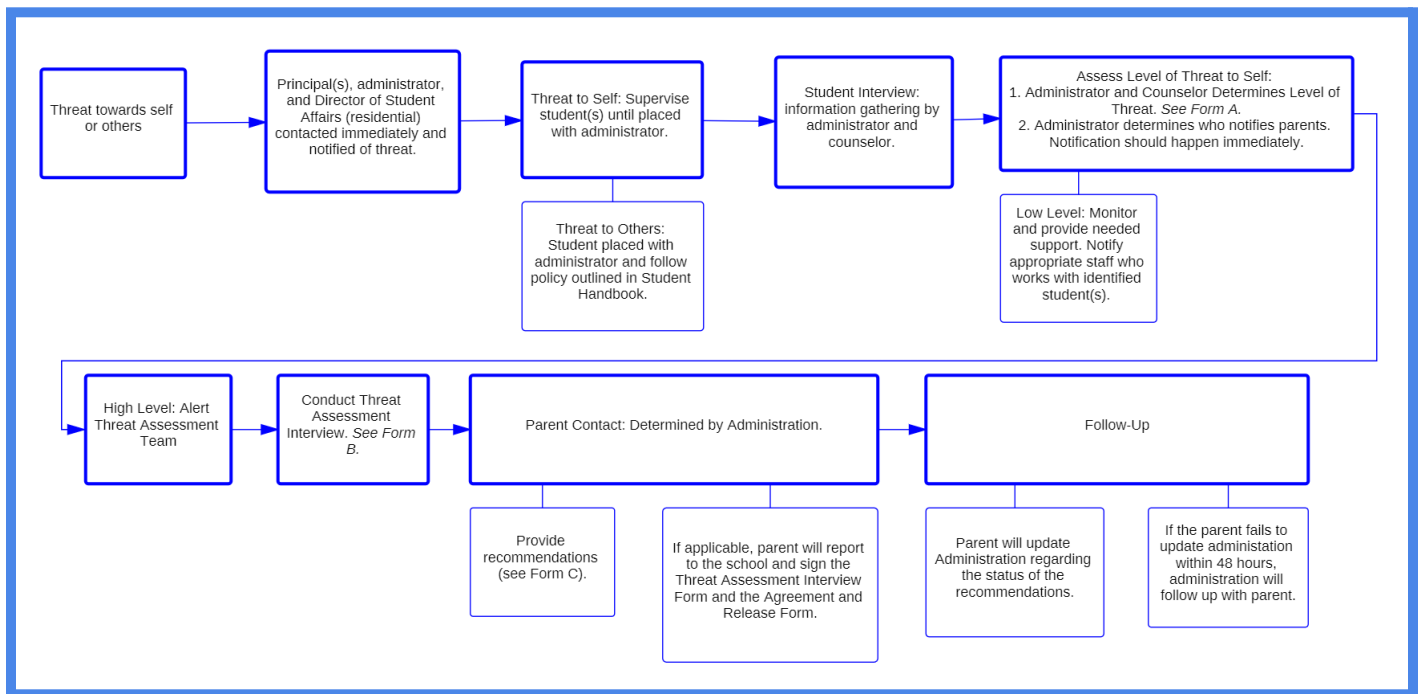
Search And Seizure

Lockers and rooms are considered school property and are loaned to the students. They may not contain anything illegal or dangerous. **When there is a reasonable cause for concern, school authorities, standing in loco parent/guardian, may search the lockers or rooms and seize any illegal or dangerous material.** Prior to a locker search, students will be notified and permitted to be present during the search. If school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains material which pose a threat to the health, safety or welfare of students in the school, lockers may be searched without warning. Student possessions, e.g. coats, book bags, suitcases, may be searched if there is reasonable concern that the student possesses some illegal or dangerous material as stated above.

Administration has the right to request outside assistance of local or state law enforcement (i.e. K-9, narcotics or explosive device) when conducting searches of lockers, rooms, or other school properties.

Whenever there is reasonable belief that a student has illegal or dangerous material on their person, a school authority of the same sex may search that student's person and seize the material. A witness of the same sex will be present during such a search. The administration has the right to request the help of local or state law enforcement (i.e. canine detector or explosive detecting dogs).

Weapons And Illegal Behavior



Terroristic Threat

In the event that a student makes a violent threat to someone on the WPSD campus, the student will be evaluated by WPSD staff, on an incident-by-incident basis, to determine which level of severity of consequence should be used for that student. **A terroristic threat shall mean a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize another, to cause evacuation of a building, or to cause serious public inconvenience, in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.** In the event of a terroristic threat, the local police will be contacted.

First Incident

Minimum of two-day suspension from school with school district approval. The Edgewood Police will be called on campus. There will be a required meeting/evaluation by the Counseling and Evaluation Team before the student departs for home. A recommendation will be made to determine the need for future services upon the student's return.

OR

One ten-day suspension from school must be done with school district approval. Edgewood Police will

be notified of the threat, because the threat was made in that jurisdiction. If appropriate, the school district police department will be notified of the threat. An IEP meeting will be held to discuss placement options.

Second Incident:

One ten-day suspension from school must be done with school district approval. Edgewood Police will be notified of the threat, because the threat was made in that jurisdiction. If appropriate, the school district police department will be notified of the threat. An IEP meeting will be held to discuss placement options.

Procedures for children with cognitive challenges are determined by the state and all state regulations are followed.

Possession of a Weapon or Illegal Substance

In the event that a student is found to be in possession of either a weapon or an illegal substance on the WPSD campus, the student will be evaluated by WPSD staff, on an incident-by-incident basis, to determine which level of severity of consequence should be used for that student.

Definitions:

Weapons shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Drug means (i) a substance recognized in the official United States Pharmacopeia, or official National Formulary, or any supplement to either of them; and (ii) a substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease in man or other animals; and (iii) a substance (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body of man or other animals; and (iv) a substance intended for use as a component of any article specified in clause (i), (ii), or (iii), but not including devices or their components, parts or accessories.

Controlled substance means a drug, substance, or immediate precursor in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act.

Procedure

One 10-day In-School or Out-of-School Suspension. Parents/guardians and police will be notified immediately. The student will be placed in a restricted area pending final decision. This must be done with school district approval. Edgewood Police will be notified of the possession, because the possession occurred in that jurisdiction. If appropriate, the school district police department will be notified of the possession. An IEP meeting will be held to discuss placement options.

Procedures for children with cognitive challenges are determined by the state and all state regulations are followed.



Code of Conduct

The intent of this Conduct Code is to hold students accountable for their own behavior and to teach them that their acts result in natural consequences. Good behavior results in positive rewards such as good grades and approval from parents/guardians, teachers and friends, while bad behavior results in negative responses such as restriction of privileges, unhappy parents/guardians, friends and teachers and other penalties appropriate to the severity of their unacceptable acts.

In some instances, punitive measures are NOT the most ideal method for resolving disciplinary issues. If this is the case, a disciplinary committee will convene. A designated team will confront the student and put into action the alternative option(s). These actions will be documented and placed in the student file.

WPSD provides optimum living conditions and a healthy learning environment to ensure each student's right to a free and appropriate education so all may achieve at their full potential. The following Code of Conduct has been formulated to help each student obtain the above goals.

Category I

Description: Minor misbehavior on the part of the student which impedes orderly classroom or residence procedures. These misbehaviors should be handled by employees responsible for the students at the time of the misdeed using resources for which they are responsible.

PROCEDURES	EXAMPLES	DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS
1. Immediate intervention by staff member(s) who are instructing or directing the actions of the students, i.e., classroom teachers would supervise Reflective Lunch and restrict students from classroom privileges, while residential supervisors would have after school activities available to them for disciplinary options. However, in a few instances, the support of other school personnel may be required. 2. Accurate and current records of all Category I problems and disciplinary actions will be kept on file. 3. Incident reports will be completed and forwarded to the immediate supervisor. The Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life will follow up with parent/guardian contact. The report will be routed to appropriate administrators.	Classroom and residential disruptions Hallway, stairway, playground and dining room disturbances Cheating, lying and stealing Abusing school property Tardiness Violating the student dress code Arguing Throwing snowballs Improper social behavior/ excessive public display of affection Use of profane, vulgar or obscene language Threats Vandalism/theft of up to \$49 (Repeated violations move up to Category II) Computer use infractions (accessing chat rooms, using e-mail at unauthorized times, etc.) Unauthorized use of personal mobile devices	Verbal reprimand Withdrawal of privileges, i.e. parties, field trips, Snack Bar, etc. Special assignments Reflective Lunch, after school or at other times Exclusion from group activities Behavior contract Restitution or payment for willfully destroyed property Counseling Written apology Dormitory room confinement

*Note: Category I Examples and Disciplinary Options are not limited to those provided.

Category II

Misbehavior, which because of the frequency or seriousness, tends to disrupt the rights of others on school grounds or during off-campus activities and classes. Category II referrals may include, but are not limited to, a continuation of Category I disciplinary actions. Included in Category II are misbehaviors which tend to disrupt the learning climate of the school and the normal operations of the dormitory program. These incidents are to be referred to the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life.

PROCEDURES	EXAMPLES	DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS
- The student will be referred to the Director, Principal or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life for disciplinary action. - The referring staff member must complete an incident report and forward it to their immediate supervisor. If the administrator feels that the incident is serious enough to warrant a written report to parents/guardians, the incident report will be rewritten as a Behavior Report. The reporting procedure and routing of report copies are listed below. - The originator of the report will sign the report and give it (original and copies A, B, C) to the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life. - The actions taken by the administrator will be added to the Behavior Report. - The appropriate administrators will meet with the student and/or referring staff member. A conference may occur either on campus or at the home of the student. - A Child Study Conference may be requested.	Persistent Category I misconduct Vandalism/Theft of \$50.00 - \$99.00. (Repeated violations move to Category III) Cutting classes, clubs, etc. Forgery Intimidation/Extortion/Threats Abusive language toward a staff member Fighting Harassment Disruptive behaviors Defiance of authority Unauthorized access of computer network Computer use infractions. (Accessing inappropriate content on the Internet, abusing computer hardware, etc.) Unauthorized use of personal mobile devices (repeated)	Continuation of expansion of Category I disciplinary actions Counseling Behavior modification Reflective Lunch, after school or at other times Work assignments Restitution or payment for willfully destroyed property Restriction of after school privileges for in-school infraction and vice versa In-school suspension Out-of-school suspension

*Note: Category II Examples and Disciplinary Options are not limited to those provided.

Category III

Deliberate or continuing acts committed by students, which pose a definite interruption to the well-being of the students and employees of the school. The violations of the Conduct Code policies of the school resulting in referrals to Category III shall be handled by the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life. Behavior referred to Category III may include persistent problems from Categories I and II.

PROCEDURES	EXAMPLES	DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS
1. A written report will be submitted by the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life. An investigation of the incident will be conducted including personal interviews with the student and appropriate staff members. 2. A group meeting will be held with the student and appropriate staff so that the student shall be guaranteed all due process rights. 3. A parent/guardian/staff meeting may be requested at the school or at the home of the student. 4. A Child Study Conference may be requested. 5. A letter and/or copy of the behavior report will be sent to the parents/guardians.	Persistent Category I or II misconduct Failure to comply with existing school policy Physical aggression toward staff member Unauthorized occupation of school property and facilities Vandalism/theft Possession of weapons Sexual misconduct Sexual harassment Fighting Abusive language toward staff member Possession, use, sale, or distribution of drug related paraphernalia Possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages or drugs or medication (see p. 53) Possession, use, sale, or distribution of nicotine or tobacco products; e-cigarettes or vapor cigarettes Coming to school under the influence of any alcohol or drugs Defiance of authority Setting off false alarms Unauthorized absence from campus Unauthorized use of vehicles Refusal to accept disciplinary measures on	Continuation or expansion of Category I and II disciplinary actions Counseling Referral to law enforcement authorities Restitution or payment for willfully destroyed property In-school suspension Out-of-school suspension

	Category I or II misbehaviors Unauthorized access of computer networks	
*Note: Category III Examples and Disciplinary Options are not limited to those provided.		

Category IV		
Acts which result in violence to another person and/or property. Also those acts which pose a direct threat to the safety and health of the student or others. Category IV actions shall be directed to the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life.		
PROCEDURES	EXAMPLES	DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS
1. The incident will be investigated thoroughly by the appointed administrator or turned over to the police if appropriate. A record of this investigation shall be made and maintained by the administrator. 2. Separate meetings will be held with the student and any witnesses to the incident. The student shall be accorded their due process rights prior to the determination of disciplinary actions. 3. The parents/guardians will be notified in writing and requested to attend a meeting. Local school district (LEA) officials will be notified of the incident and actions taken. 4. WPSD personnel will determine if suspension or expulsion is appropriate.	Persistent Category I, II or III misconduct Assault and/or battery Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons, fireworks or other explosives Vandalism/theft Defiance of authority Possession, use, sale, or distribution of any alcoholic beverages or drugs Arson Sexual misconduct Sexual harassment Any act that is against the laws of Pennsylvania or the United States Refusal to accept disciplinary measures on Category I, II or III misbehaviors	Continuation or expansion of Category I, II or III disciplinary actions In-school suspension Out-of-school suspension Expulsion Referral to law enforcement authorities
*Note: Category IV Examples and Disciplinary Options are not limited to those provided.		

Parent/Guardian Notification

Notification of more serious infractions (Category II-IV): As stated in the Code of Conduct, after misbehavior occurs within Category II-IV, an incident or behavior report will be placed in the student's file. Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone of the incident and behavior reports will be sent to the parents/guardians and school district.

Definitions

Behavior Report - A report completed by the Superintendent, Principal and/or Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life. Behavior reports are completed for all suspensions, both in and out of school. The report is sent to the parents/guardians and the school district and is filed in the student's file. Parents/guardians are always notified by telephone when an incident is serious enough to warrant serious consequences.

Child Study - School personnel meet to discuss the student's performance that may lead to non-disciplinary action; or may be related to concerns about poor academic performance that may lead to other educational recommendations.

Reflective Lunch - Removal of lunch room privileges or staying after school in a teacher's classroom or other designated area.

Out of School Suspension - Student is removed from classroom, residence and after school activities. The student's parents/guardians are called and may be required to transport the student from school to home. Out of School suspension is determined in accordance with the severity of the offense. Out of School Suspension is pending school district notification and approval.

Incident Report - A report completed by the staff member witnessing an incident; includes information related to the incident and the consequence. The report is filed in the student's file.

Under the Jurisdiction of the School - A student is under the jurisdiction of the school when student is in a class, on a field trip, in the dormitory, on WPSD provided transportation, or during athletic and student activities that are directed or supervised by school personnel during the academic school year.



Student Policies

Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for a school environment. This policy applies equally to all students regardless of body size, shape, or gender.

Students may not wear clothing or jewelry that, through words, symbols, or images, promotes sexual activity, violence, alcohol, or drug use, or that demeans or degrades others based on race, sex, religion, national origin, or disability.

General Guidelines

- Clothing must be clean and in good repair (no significant rips, tears, or stains), except where noted below for jeans.
- The following must be covered at all times: chest, midriff, back, and buttocks. This applies to all students equally, regardless of body type.
- Undergarments (including bras and waistbands) should not be visible through or above outer clothing.

- Clothing, jewelry, and accessories must not create a safety hazard (see *Shoes* and *Accessories* below).
- Specific activities (PE, labs, shop classes, extracurriculars) may require particular attire for safety reasons, as directed by staff.

Tops

- Tops must cover the chest, midriff, and back.
- Tank tops, sleeveless shirts, and other strap-style tops are permitted as long as coverage requirements above are met.
- Necklines may not expose undergarments or the chest area.

Bottoms (Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Dresses)

- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must reach mid-thigh length or longer. Slits may extend to fingertip length.
- Pants and shorts must be worn at the waist.
- Leggings are permitted when worn with a top that reaches mid-thigh length.
- Jeans with tears or holes below the knee are fine as-is. Holes above the knee need a layer underneath (such as leggings) so no skin is exposed.

Accessories

- Hats and coats should not be worn indoors except in cases of extreme weather; coats can be stored in a designated area.
- For safety, chains (e.g., wallet chains), spiked jewelry, and dangling or oversized earrings are not permitted.
- Facial piercings are limited to a single nose stud; other visible piercings (eyebrow, tongue, etc.) should be removed or covered during school hours.
- Visible tattoos are permitted. Students are not required to cover them.
- Students are encouraged to leave particularly expensive or sentimental jewelry at home, as the school cannot guarantee against loss.

Shoes

- Shoes must be safe for the school environment: closed-toe, with a back strap or heel support.
- Flip-flops and other unsecured footwear are not permitted.

Enforcement

If a student's clothing does not meet these guidelines, staff will address it privately and respectfully, offering the student a reasonable solution (such as a layering item from the school) rather than public correction or removal from class. The goal of this policy is student safety and a distraction-free learning environment — not to police individual bodies or appearance.

Disciplinary Action(s) for Dress Code Violations

If a student violates the dress code, they will be instructed to report to the office, and he/she will remain removed from the rest of the student body until proper adjustments have been made to inappropriate clothing (i.e., change of clothes).

1st and 2nd Infractions:

Students will be directed to the office, warnings will be issued, and they will be asked to change into clothing that is appropriate for school.

***3rd and Subsequent Infractions:**

Students will be directed to the office, Reflective Lunch assigned.

*Repeated dress code infractions can lead to further discipline, including and up to suspension.

Personal Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Students will not be permitted to use personal cell phones, smart watches, or other personal communication devices during the school day. Students must store their devices in designated storage boxes during the school day. Students can use their personal communication before the school day begins and after the school day ends. If parents need to reach their child, they can call or email their child's principal/administrative assistant. If a child needs a personal communication device for medical reasons, please discuss this with your child's principal.

Our weekly school schedule is as follows:

Monday - Thursday: 8:00-3:00 Friday: 8:00-12:30

Students found to be in violation of the policy will experience the following consequences:

First offense: Verbal warning and the device will be held by the teacher until the end of the day.

Second offense: The device will be turned into the office and a call will be made to home to parents to discuss arrangements to pick up the device. Students will also be issued a reflective lunch.

Third offense: A meeting will be scheduled with the student and parent(s) to discuss further steps.

WPSD is not responsible for personal devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged on campus.

Student Technology at The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf students may have access to a variety of devices in the School and Residences. Students in grades K-12 may also be assigned an individual

device. These devices remain the property of The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Students must agree to comply with the specific guidelines regarding usage of student assigned devices through a Student Technology Usage Agreement signed by both the student and a parent or guardian. This agreement is separate from The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and must be signed and returned prior to receiving the assigned device. Students are expected to comply with all policies in the Acceptable Use Policy and in Student Technology Usage Agreement when using these devices.

Student technology devices are to be used for school purposes only, not personal use. Excessive use of The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf equipment for personal use shall be cause for disciplinary action for Students. The return of these devices in good condition at the end of each school year, before transfer, or before withdrawal at The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is required.

The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf students in Grades 5 and above who have returned signed permission forms from their parents or guardians will be provided with a school-maintained, content-filtered email account. Students are allowed to use this The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf-provided email account only. Access to external email sites/accounts (such as Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Hotmail, etc.) are prohibited.

Students in Grades 5 through 12 who wish to have a school email account must complete and return a Student Email Account Agreement. This permission form must be submitted in addition to the AUP Agreement before an email account will be assigned. Students in Grades 5 through 12 are not required to have an email account, but these content-filtered accounts are helpful for communication among teachers and students for academic purposes.

Guidelines for appropriate technology use:

- Use school equipment for school work only
- Streaming movies, videos, and music is not allowed
- Respect other student's equipment and privacy
- Accessing other student's accounts is not allowed
- ALL student email is monitored. Use email for school work only
- Be responsible: remember your passwords so you are prepared for classwork
- Keep your passwords private. Do not share with other students
- Let a teacher know if another student is not using their technology appropriately

Being a Good Digital Citizen

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf network and on technology equipment just as they are in a school facility or a school-sanctioned event. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. When using the Internet, all students will be closely monitored to prevent accidental or deliberate access to inappropriate material. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as students interact with the digital world including; computers, social media, online services, etc.

Videophone Use

Our Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf students and staff have the opportunity to use The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Video Phones in school offices and in the Residences. All are expected to comply with the conditions of the Acceptable Use Policy when using VRS devices on the The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf campus.

Guidelines for student video phone use:

- The remote must be kept with staff at all times in a secure, locked place.
- All calls must be approved by staff and a log must be kept for the students each time they use the VRS.
- Students are not permitted to go into and/or change the settings of the device.
- Use of VRS is restricted to a fifteen minute limit unless otherwise approved by The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf staff.
- The System closes at bedtime.
- No profanity or inappropriate behavior will be tolerated with using a videophone device.

Consequences for misuse of the VP will be as follows:

- 1st offense - warning
- 2nd offense - 24 hours suspension from VP use 3rd offense - 5 days suspension from VP Use
- 3rd offense - 5 days suspension from VP use

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf utilizes Google Gemini as the authorized platform for all AI-driven tasks. Accessing Gemini through the school's Google Education license ensures essential data security and privacy, as this environment prevents user input from being utilized to train or improve the global AI database. Students and staff must exclusively use the school-provided Google Gemini platform for all school and/or work-related artificial intelligence activities. All AI utilization must originate from original work created by students or staff. Images of students or staff may not be uploaded or edited with AI without prior written permission. Staff within each academic department at The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (Children's Center, Elementary, Middle, and High School) are responsible for upholding and enforcing their department's established guidelines.

Internet, Technology, and Electronic Information Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Mission

The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf offer students and staff access to our network and internet services through a variety of different technology devices. Our goal in providing technology access and services is to promote educational excellence in the school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf are compliant with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use, network infrastructure, and servers.

Computer, network, and Internet access is a privilege, not a right, and is provided for staff and students to conduct research, fulfill course requirements, communicate with others, and to perform assigned job duties. Access to these devices and services is given to staff and students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner, in accordance with organizational policies.

Activities using any school technology property in violation of local, state, federal or school policies are strictly forbidden. Violations of any guidelines listed below may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination. If necessary, school administrators will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.

Prohibited Activities

Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Using another person's password or account or providing their password to another person.
- Connecting personal computers or laptops to campus networks, wifi or otherwise.
- Invading the privacy of other individuals.
- Trespassing in another person's folder, work or files without permission, in the attempt to view, use, or alter others' work.
- Deliberate action that alters the computer's configuration or system settings or limits its usefulness.
- Downloading unauthorized software on school computers/networks. All software installed on The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf computers must be installed by the schools' Technology Departments and only after the proper licenses or authorizations for use have been acquired and verified.
- Making any attempt to hack into or defeat servers or network security on The Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Network or any other client, server, or network on the Internet.
- Creating, uploading, or transmitting computer viruses, worms or other disruptive software code.

- Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks (hardware or software). If a student or staff maliciously damages or alters school technical equipment in such a way that requires service or repairs, they will be responsible for providing all expenses incurred for those services. **(For example: stickers of any type on Chromebooks are not permitted).**
- Using the school networks to download, upload, stream or store large files such as music and video that are not directly related to a project or activity that is part of the school curriculum.
- Accessing streaming music or video sites (such as Spotify, YouTube Music, Apple Music, Amazon Music, iTunes, Pandora, iHeart Radio, etc.) unless specifically approved by a school administrator for educational purposes.
- Accessing social media sites and media sharing sites (such as Facetime, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) unless specifically approved by a school administrator for educational purposes.
- Connecting to personal Internet subscription services to view, stream or download media (such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, Hulu, Paramount+, etc.) unless specifically approved by a school administrator for educational purposes.
- Accessing, transmitting, or retransmitting threatening, harassing, obscene, and pornographic (written, pictures, song lyrics, etc.) or trade secret material or any material deemed harmful to minors.
- Using the network to access, transmit or retransmit language that can be considered defamatory, abusive or offensive, or that could cause danger or disruption, engage others in personal prejudicial or discriminatory attacks or that harasses or causes distress to another person.
- Accessing, transmitting, or retransmitting material that promotes violence or the destruction of persons or property by any device including but not limited to firearms, explosives, fireworks, smoke bombs, incendiary devices or other similar material. All users agree to report any accidental access of any of the aforementioned material to the appropriate school authority.
- Using the network or school computer for commercial or for-profit purposes or political lobbying.
- Any activity harmful or reflecting negatively on The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf community.

Monitoring

Our schools use a firewall, internet content filter, and network monitoring equipment in order to regulate and control activity on our networks from any connected devices, as well as for monitoring internet usage. We prioritize the security and protection of our students, staff, equipment, property, and assets as well as providing a safe internet experience for our students and staff as much as possible. We reserve the right to remove any equipment, including personal, from accessing our network or internet. We reserve the right to remove data and files from school equipment, possibly without notice. We also reserve the right to revoke an individual's access to our technology equipment, network, internet, or other services.

1. The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf reserves the right to monitor all actions and communications of any student or employee using school equipment, school technology services, school property, or school networks.
2. There is no absolute privacy with the following:
 - a. On our school networks.
 - b. On any school equipment.
 - c. On school email.
 - d. On any communications that use school equipment, or the school networks.
 - e. Any files saved or stored on school equipment, or school provided web services. Even if those files are of a personal nature. This also includes using school property at home or on other networks.

School Email

School Students and Staff are ONLY permitted to use the school-provided email accounts on campus and school devices. External email sites (such as Gmail, iCloud Mail, Microsoft Outlook, Hotmail, AOL Mail, Yahoo Mail, Verizon, Comcast, etc.) are prohibited and may be blocked from access on campus. Staff who desire to add their school email account to personal & portable devices must ensure the privacy of student and staff information by maintaining passcode locks and/or password protected logins to devices.

The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf reserves the right to force security on personal devices that add school email to their personal portable device, such as a smartphone or tablet. The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf has the capability to lock or possibly erase any personal portable device after adding said email account. This is to ensure the safety and privacy of our communications, email, and data. School email must be removed or deleted from any personal device at the end of employment or enrollment. Authorized Technology Department Staff can also remotely force the deletion of the data.

The school communication systems, as well as the equipment and data stored, are and remain at all times the property of The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Accordingly, all messages and files created, sent, received or stored within the systems should be related to School business and are and will remain the property of the School.

The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf reserves the right to retrieve and review any message or file composed, sent or received. It should be noted that although a message or file is deleted or erased, it is still possible to be retrieved. Therefore, the privacy of messages cannot be assured to anyone. Although electronic mail and voice mail may allow the use of passwords for security, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Digital Communications Use

When utilizing school provided electronic communications systems, etiquette is important. The basic strategies for effective e-mail communication are as follows:

- Keep all communication brief and efficient.
- Avoid communicating through these systems on sensitive subjects; confidential information should be communicated in another form.
- Retrieve/read all messages and respond regularly.
- Ensure that messages are deleted or saved; the server should not be used for permanent storage.

The content of email, messaging, VP use, video mail, voice mail or TTY messages may not contain anything that would reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive. The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School for The Deaf expressly prohibits the following:

- Chat/client programs and chat/instant messaging (such as Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Discord, etc.,) unless specifically approved by a school administrator for educational purposes.
- The use of school accounts to receive listserv email or to solicit or send junk mail.
- Dissemination or printing of copyrighted materials, including articles and software, which are violations of copyright laws.
- Offensive or harassing statements or language including disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs.
- Sending or soliciting sexually-oriented messages or images.
- Operating a business, usurping business opportunities or soliciting money for personal gain.
- Sending or re-sending email chain letters or engaging in any spamming activities where bulk mailings of unsolicited email are sent.
- Gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of local, state or federal law.

Our students and staff have the opportunity to use video phones in school offices, in the Residences, and in public areas around campus. All are expected to comply with the conditions of the Acceptable Use policy when using these devices. Videophone use for employees is for work or business purposes only.

Violations of any guidelines listed above in the 'Digital Communications' section, may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. If necessary, the School will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.

Third Party Information Sharing

It is strictly prohibited to transmit, store, upload, communicate, reveal or otherwise use our student or organization information that is sensitive with any un-approved third party.

A “third party” is defined as any group, company, online service or entity that exists outside of our organization.

- Sensitive information is any information that could jeopardize the privacy and livelihood of the organization. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Student or staff demographic information
 - Student or staff ‘personally identifiable information’. ‘Personally identifiable information’ is defined as ANY information that could potentially be used to identify a specific individual (names, grades, social security numbers, addresses, etc.)
 - Student grades or other performance related data
 - Copies of internal communication
 - The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf financial information
 - Student documents related to educational services provided by The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School for The Deaf

Examples of approved third party entities which have access to our information and data: Google Suite, Clever, IEPWriter, Alma, Renaissance Learning, NWEA Map, LinkIt, STAR Math, STAR Reading, and many other educational platforms.

It is the sole responsibility of each employee to protect sensitive data when using file sharing services such as Google Drive. Sensitive data should NOT be made public through those services. Use of The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf information and data with a third party must be approved by the The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf Supervisor of Information Technology Systems.

Consequences of Policy Non-Compliance

Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) may result in:

- Denial, suspension or cancellation of the users’ privileges (temporary or permanent) as well as other disciplinary and/or legal action deemed appropriate and imposed by the school administration, The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf administration and/or local, state or federal law enforcement officials.
- The user shall be responsible to make full restitution for any damage (including all labor costs for repair or replacement) to equipment, software and any other part of the network determined by the Technology department along with the school administration.

- Other actions not specified above may include but are not limited to monetary restitution, school suspension or expulsion, Reflective Lunch or any other action deemed appropriate by the administrative authorities.

Terms and Conditions for Use of The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Technology Equipment and Electronic Information Resources

All users of The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf network and Internet access are required to adhere to the schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The attached policy describes in detail the purpose of the The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf networks and the rules governing use. All users and the parents/guardians of all student users are required by The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf AUP to agree that they will abide by the policy while using computers, portable devices and network resources and any personal devices on the campuses.

All users, including faculty and staff, must be aware that misuse of the network facilities could result in disciplinary action by The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf officials including termination of employment or legal action by local, state and/or federal law enforcement officials. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all to carefully read The Programs of The Western Pennsylvania School For The Deaf AUP and understand what is expected and the penalty for non-compliance.

***A signature is NOT required to make this AUP binding for students
The use of the The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the
Deaf's network, equipment, and electronic information systems denotes
the user's agreement of responsibility***

Disclaimer

1. While The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf makes a best effort to protect and secure data, there is no guarantee against file and data loss. Connecting personal equipment, storing personal files, work related files, etc. is done at your own risk.
2. The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf cannot be held accountable for the information that is retrieved via the Internet, network, or e-mail.
3. Pursuant to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 (18 USC 2510 et seq.), notice is hereby given that there are no facilities provided by this system for sending or receiving private or confidential electronic communications. System administrators have access to all mail and may monitor messages. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
4. The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf will not be responsible for any damages any user may suffer, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or

service interruptions caused by user negligence, errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained is at the user's own risk.

5. The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf makes no warranties (expressed or implied) with respect to the content of any advice or information received by a user, or any costs or charges incurred as a result of seeing or accepting any information, or any costs, liability, or damages caused by the way the user chooses to use his or her access to the Internet, network, or e-mail.
6. All staff and students of The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf shall be responsible for abiding by the policies of this AUP. No signature is required to make this AUP binding on staff and students. The use of The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's equipment and electronic media denotes the user's agreement of responsibility. However, The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf shall make concerted effort to inform staff and students of this AUP through such means as publications in student and staff handbooks, notices in all school offices, oral information from supervisors and/or teachers, and distribution of AUP copies.
7. Any staff or student who violates any of the AUP policies will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include but not limited to the loss of use privilege for the Internet, network, and/or equipment; loss of the e-mail account assignment, and/or any other disciplinary deemed appropriate by The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf authorities.
8. The Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf reserves the right to change its policies and rules at any time.

Communication Policy

WPSD students learn to effectively communicate using ASL and English languages. Academic, emotional, and social success are fostered by a robust communication environment. To that end, we work toward providing full access to communication in an environment where each student's skills are developed to the highest level of their abilities.

WPSD recognizes the possible use of a variety of communication modes to enhance mutual understanding both in and out of the classroom. Consistent with the individualized approach to education, the selective use of all means of communication is explored, including, but not limited to, American Sign Language and written and spoken English, with or without simultaneous manual representation. Such use does not require that only one single mode or language be used exclusive of all others. Instead, the needs of students and specific situations should determine the language and mode to be used. With this in mind, staff members who interact directly with students at WPSD are expected to follow those principles outlined below.

- At WPSD, we have a unique obligation to teach students who use two languages, American Sign Language and English. We recognize ASL as the language of the Deaf Community and we respect the cultural heritage from which it is derived. Within the WPSD environment, students and staff members typically use ASL, English, or the contact language (commonly referred to as PSE) derived

through the use of those languages. Students have formal instruction and/or informal exposure to ASL dependent on their individual abilities and needs. To ensure consistency throughout the educational program, each staff member is expected to use the individual signs which are common to ASL and/or to the local Deaf community.

- Any student becomes better able to learn independently when a student has access to information that is available through the written word. Also, students must be prepared to interact with the majority culture of this nation. Therefore, it is a primary goal for students at WPSD to learn the English language for the purpose of reading and writing as well as speaking. Each student receives formal instruction and informal exposure to vocabulary, grammar and English language use. This instruction includes reading and writing experiences. In the instructional setting, teachers provide exposure to English and encourage proficient English usage in all subject areas.
- Oral/aural communication programs are designed to meet a student's capabilities and needs as identified in the IEP. Students have the opportunity to develop skills in oral/aural interaction. They receive instruction individually and/or in small groups to improve speech production, auditory skills, speech reading skills and to become responsible in the use and care of amplification and assistive technology devices. This instruction is addressed in the student's IEP under related services.
- Every student, staff member and visitor to WPSD has the right to open and accessible communication. Since staff members are very concerned about the developing language system of the students, they recognize that conversation between adults is both sharing with each other and a model of language use and interactive behavior for students. Although exceptional situations occur, faculty, students and staff members must be continually sensitive to the communication needs of all those in the School and assure that, whenever possible, that mode is used which will enhance the opportunity for mutual participation within the communication environment.
- Staff members have an obligation to achieve those receptive and expressive skills necessary to assure full access to clear communication throughout the school environment. The School supports staff development by providing courses in American Sign Language, Deaf Culture and other courses as needed.

Service Animals Policy

A student may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational purposes. However, there is no automatic right to be accompanied by a service animal in the school setting.

Parents/guardians who believe their student needs to bring a service animal to school shall notify the Principal. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school/school activities shall be handled and cared for in manner detailed in the student's IEP.

The following documentation shall be provided by the owner/handler of the animal:

1. Verification of the need for the service animal.
2. Description of the function of the service animal.
3. Current dog license.
4. Proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal.

The owner/handler of the service animal shall be solely responsible for:

1. Supervision and care of the animal, including any feeding, exercising, cleanup and stain removal.
2. Control of the animal at all times through use of a harness, leash, tether or other effective means.
3. Damages to school buildings, property, and vehicles caused by the animal.
4. Injuries to students, employees, volunteers and visitors caused by the animal.
5. Annual submission of documentation of vaccinations and immunizations.

School administrators may exclude a service animal from school buildings, property and vehicles under the following circumstances:

1. Presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
2. Owner/handler is unable to control the animal.
3. The animal is not housebroken.
4. Presence of the animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the educational process.
5. Presence of the animal would require a fundamental alteration to the program.

The decision to exclude, limit or remove a service animal may be appealed in writing, in accordance with school policy.

Source: Pennsylvania School Boards Association policy 718- "Service Animals in Schools"

Public Displays Of Affection

Relationships naturally occur during the teenage years. Every student is expected to act in a responsible and respectable manner at all times. Excessive public displays of affection are not appropriate during school or in public meeting places during after-school hours. Excessive public displays of affection are described as any action in public directed toward another which exhibits a physical expression of affection that is intimate in nature. Hugging and kissing at inappropriate times and places are not permitted. **Dating between Middle School and High School students is strongly discouraged.**

Cars On Campus

Students are not permitted to have cars on campus at any time without permission from the Superintendent and the Principal. Students who have written permission from parents/guardians to drive to school must leave car keys in the Principal's office. In order to drive vehicles throughout the week while on campus, written permission must be obtained from parents/guardians. No other student may join student drivers without written permission from parents/guardians.

Dining Room

Students are required to report to the dining room for every meal. Day students may purchase lunch at school or bring lunch from home. Those confined at the Health Center due to illness or injury will eat their meals at the Health Center. Day students must obtain special permission from the Director of Student Life/Assistant Director of Student Life to eat breakfast and/or dinner at school.

Students are not permitted to purchase candy, snacks or beverages from vending machines at lunch time. If a student forgets to bring a bag lunch, that student will receive a school lunch and will be expected to pay for that lunch as soon as possible.

Energy drinks those with high levels of caffeine and/or energy boosting ingredients such as ephedrine, guarana and ginseng), energy mints and energy gum are prohibited on campus.

