

Westlake Charter Schools Student/Parent Handbook 2013 - 2014



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HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

Westlake Charter Schools (herein known as “WCS”) will comply with all applicable laws to the extent required by such law. To assist families in understanding their rights, Westlake Charter School has included summaries of some current laws in this handbook. Of course, as those rights change due to revisions in applicable law, Westlake Charter School will comply with the revisions in applicable law. This handbook will be deemed to be revised to be consistent with applicable legal revisions whenever such legal revisions become effective even though the handbook language has not been changed. This handbook does not create rights beyond those required by applicable law.

This handbook refers to many WCS board policies. Many of the board policies are included in this handbook. To view the board policies in their entirety please refer to the WCS website at www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php.

INTRODUCTION

Westlake Charter School is a collaborative effort among parents, teachers, and community members committed to the development of the whole child. Through the establishment of a charter school, we believe we can work within the public school system to create an innovative alternative model to traditional public elementary schools.

Westlake Charter School educates children from kindergarten through eighth grade. The School is designed for families who want to take an active role in the education of their children, both in and out of the classroom.

At the core of our philosophy is respect for the individual child. We believe that children are intelligent, passionate learners who are naturally motivated to explore the world around them. Our job as educators is to develop curriculum that responds to our children's innate thirst for knowledge with enthusiasm, creativity and encouragement. In doing so, we hope young people will leave our school with as much passion, curiosity and wonder as they came in with.

To implement such an ambitious vision, parent participation is essential. We see parents as the facilitators of their children's learning and partners in their education. Our task is to build not just a school, but also a community in which a diversity of strengths, cultures, and family backgrounds is valued.

Since we view education as a lifelong process, we assume that the adults who become involved with Westlake Charter School will learn as much as its students. We envision our school as a center of learning for families, children, and teachers; one in which the real world comes into the classroom and the classroom goes out to the real world.

WESTLAKE CHARTER SCHOOLS

Mission

Westlake Charter School's mission is to equip students with the skills necessary for life-long learning by providing a physically and emotionally safe learning environment that supports academic risk taking, invites student participation, and structures cooperative learning experiences.

Instructional Vision

Westlake Charter School, in partnership with families and the community, provide students with a challenging, personalized, standards-based education through the use of Strategic Design and a thematic approach that develops a global mindset, embraces cultural diversity, and fosters a lifelong love of learning.

WCS's Core Purpose

Expanding opportunities... connecting children to the world

WCS's Core Values:

- Respect
- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Curiosity
- Confidence
- Diversity
- Community
- Joyful Learning

Design Pillars

WCS identifies Four Pillars of a Successful School Community. These values play an important part in building and supporting the school's culture. By focusing our school on these principles, we create a learning community in which students can develop the skills necessary for future success in any endeavor.

1. **Our Place in a Global World-** WCS recognizes that we live in a world where national cultures are converging and civilization is becoming more interrelated. Our school strives to provide our students with the skills necessary to embrace cultural diversity and the mindset that they can make a difference in the world around them.
2. **Enriched Educational Opportunities-** WCS strives to provide learning opportunities that are hands-on, project based, and diverse in content. We recognize that education should go beyond the core subjects. As a result, we offer art, physical education, and Spanish instruction through specialized teachers.

3. **Personalization-** WCS is committed to offering learner-centered programs that are thematic, integrated, and include differentiated strategies to learning. Teachers use a wide array of teaching techniques that include small group learning, heterogeneous and homogenous grouping, and creative projects.
4. **Teachers as Designers-** WCS works towards hiring motivated teachers, communicating the shared vision, and providing opportunity for thoughtful instructional design. Our teachers are heavily involved in collaboratively designing the curriculum.

Our Relationship with the Natomas Unified School District

WCS is a California public charter school operating under the sponsorship of the Natomas Unified School District. WCS is a non-profit public benefit corporation and adheres to the laws governing non-profit corporations in the state of California.

Westlake Charter School's Governing Board

The Board meets every month at one of the school campuses. Meetings are open to the public except during closed session. All parents are invited to attend board meetings and to address in person or in writing any concerns, questions, or feedback concerning the governance of the schools. Agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the school bulletin boards located outside the school offices and on www.westlakecharter.com.

IMPORTANT GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/ STUDENTS

Drop-Off and Pick-Up WCS

Del Paso

Our Del Paso Campus (K-4th) does not have adult supervision for students before 7:50 a.m. If you need to bring your student prior to this time, please feel free to enroll them in BASE. If your student arrives between 7:50 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. they should report to the cafeteria.

Pebblewood

Our Pebblewood campus does not have adult supervision before 7:15am. Students arriving between 7:15 a.m. and 7:35 a.m. should report to the cafeteria. BASE is not available on the Pebblewood campus in the morning.

Start and Dismissal Times and Information

DEL PASO CAMPUS

8:20 - 2:35 PM Kindergarten (12:45 on WED ONLY)

8:20 - 3:10 PM 1st – 2nd Grade (12:55 on WED ONLY)

8:20 - 3:20 PM 3rd – 4th Grade (1:05 on WED ONLY)

PEBBLEWOOD CAMPUS

7:45 - 2:45 all grades (12:30 pm on WED ONLY)

Students will be released only to parents, guardians, and persons listed on the emergency forms. Students not picked up fifteen (15) minutes after the designated release time will be delivered to BASE. BASE program fees will apply

For the safety of all students, WCS believes it is in the best interest of the students that transportation to and from school be provided by the parents/guardians, independently or with carpools. Therefore, all students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are required to be driven to and from school (or on walking days, be dropped off at one of the official walk/bike drop off locations). Students in Grade 6 and above are encouraged to be driven to and from school; however, parents/guardians do have the option to provide written permission and sign a waiver to allow their student(s) to walk to and from school. For their safety students will not be allowed to walk if this form is not completed, signed and submitted to the school office. Copies of this waiver can be obtained by the contacting the school office.

Please provide WCS with documents about restraining orders or custody limitations. Notify your child's teacher, and the school administration, if there is any concern that an individual with restricted access to the child might attempt to contact or pick up the child from school.

If your child is leaving with someone else after school, please send a note to the teacher. Please make arrangements before school to minimize phone calls during the day.

School Closure

WCS's closure procedure in cases of power outage, storm, etc. will follow the decision of the Natomas Unified Schools District. Information will be distributed via ConnectEd phone tree. Please make sure that you notify the office if your contact information changes at any point during the school year.

Telephone Use

WCS's telephones are for business use by the staff. Students may only use their cell phones before and after school. **Cell phones must be turned off or turned into their teacher during the school day and kept in a safe, well-hidden place.** WCS recognizes that parents are concerned about their students' safety, however, cell phones that disrupt the educational process will not be tolerated and will be confiscated. If a student has a cell phone out or on during the school day, it will be confiscated and **ONLY** returned to a parent or guardian. Confiscated phones will not be returned to students. In addition, WCS personnel are not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones. Students/parents assume all responsibility for cell phones.

Parents wishing to leave emergency messages for their children may do so by contacting the office at 567-5760 (Del Paso) 928-3987 (Pebblewood). Any article to be delivered to children should be left in the office, where it will be held until your child picks it up. Children are requested to wait for rides in front of the school. Students are requested not to use the office phone for personal reasons unless they are ill or in an emergency. Classroom phones may be available for student use, should there be a situation needing urgent attention.

Visitors

We are proud of the educational program being carried out at WCS. Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms, and volunteers are especially welcome. In order to have these visitations carried out with as little disruptions to the instructional program as possible, visitations must be made in the following manner:

1. Contact your child's teacher before planning a visit. This will enable the teacher to arrange a time to meet your needs.
2. When coming for a classroom visit, parents must check into the office first to get a badge. As a safety precaution, the office must be aware of the identity and location of anyone on the school campus when classes are in session.
3. When you visit the school, you must respect the instructional time of teachers and students. Do not disturb lessons or students and teachers who are working. If you have a matter to attend to with a teacher, find a mutually agreeable time to discuss the matter.

Classroom volunteers are appreciated and valued by staff and students. Teachers often rely on parents coming in on a regular basis. As a courtesy to staff, please e-mail or call the school letting us know if you are unable to honor any time commitment as soon as you are aware of it. **Please see our School Visitation and Volunteer Policy, #07-13 for additional information in the Board Policies Section of this handbook.**

Dress Code/Uniforms

Uniforms are required for students attending WCS. P.E. (Physical Education) and/or movement activities are planned for every day, so students are encouraged to wear athletic shoes with their uniform rather than open-toed shoes and clothing that restrict movement. (Think: Shoes that my child can run a quarter-mile in; clothes for turning cartwheels!) **If a student is out of uniform the following will occur:**

- **1st Time:** Letter home informing parents that the child is not in uniform and the repeat occurrences will result in consequences.
- **2nd Time:** Student will be sent to the office. Parents will be contacted and asked to bring a uniform to the school.
- **3rd Time:** Student will be sent to the office. Administration will call parent for a conference and the student will be assigned a detention. Parents will be asked to bring a uniform to the school.
- **4th Time:** Student will be placed on a discipline contract

Please refer to our Uniform & Dress Code Policy #07-36 found in the Board Policies Section of this handbook for further information.

Items from Home

We ask that children share their toys outside of school time—Do not bring toys or trading cards, etc. to school. Toys distract from the curriculum. Although some toys may have educational value, the inherent peer pressure to purchase the same toy will be removed if toys are not present in the school setting.

iPods and electronic devices are a distraction in the classroom. Leave all electronic devices at home or in backpacks. All items of this nature will be confiscated and kept in the office until parents or guardians can retrieve them. Students and parents assume all responsibility for any items taken to school. WCS accepts no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Lunch and Snacks

Please prepare healthy food and snacks. Sugary foods and beverages are discouraged. During lunchtime students may be tempted to share lunch items with other students. Due to potential food allergies and other health concerns, the sharing of food between students violates health and safety codes. Besides, when you purchase or make a lunch for your child, you want them to eat it, not another child. We will address this here at the schools, but we need your assistance. Please talk to your child about asking others for food or giving their food to friends. We want our students to be kind, generous and learn to share, but not with their lunch or snacks. We appreciate all the help you can give us.

All students have the option to purchase breakfast, lunch, and/or milk only from the cafeteria. Menus are provided to WCS from NUSD's Food Services department on a monthly basis and are posted on our website

Prices from NUSD lunch Program

Student Lunch \$2.50

Breakfast \$1.25

Reduced Student Breakfast \$0.35

Reduced Student Lunch \$0.40

Milk \$0.50

Free and reduced priced meals are available to those families that qualify. To find out if your family qualifies for free or reduced meals please pick up an application from the WCS offices.

To deposit money into your child's food account:

Visit the cafeteria between 7:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Write a check for the amount you would like to deposit into the account. Make all checks payable to: NUSD Food Services. You may also set up your payments on the NUSD website at www.natomas.k12.ca.us. Simply click on the "Departments" link and then "Food Services" follow the e-funds link from there.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Philosophy

At WCS, we view each day as an essential learning opportunity. A significant part of your child's educational experience is derived from classroom participation, activities, discussions, and relationships. Regular attendance is crucial for your child to attain the maximum benefit from the schools experience. Therefore, we expect excellent attendance of our students. Missing school regularly not only is detrimental to a child's learning, but also can create poor learning habits. Of course, if your child is sick or has a communicable illness, he or she should stay home to rest and recover. Students are responsible for making up work missed during an absence, and should contact their teachers for assignments.

ADA and Funding

As a public school, WCS receives funding only if your child is in school. For this reason and in accordance with State law, the Schools must keep detailed records of student attendance. Daily attendance is important for many reasons, but it also directly affects our revenue. When your child is absent, WCS does not receive a portion of funding for that day.

What does an absence cost your child's school?

Public schools funding is not based on enrollment, but rather on Average Daily Attendance (ADA) WCS loses approximately \$35.00 every day your child is absent. Reminder, Excused absences are Student Illness, Bereavement of an Immediate Family Member or a Student Medical Appointment.

What does an absence cost your child?

A lost day of education may include foundational material, presentations or lessons that will adversely affect your child. An overwhelming amount of homework to make-up for the time lost. The feeling of being "left behind". In addition your child's grades may be negatively impacted due to

Early Dismissal

If your child must leave school early because of a student health appointment please notify the classroom teacher in advance and upon picking up the student, and please sign your child out in the office. Please try to schedule appointments during non-school hours whenever possible. No child will be released from class without a permission slip from the office. A CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED DURING SCHOOL HOURS TO ANYONE EXCEPT THE PARENT WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT BY THE PARENT EVEN IF THE PERSON IS ON THE EMERGENCY CARD. We follow this course of action to assure the safety of all students.

On-time Arrival

From experience, we have learned that the first moments of the day are critical to the way the whole day goes. Having everyone present at this time is essential. Please be on time every day. Students eating breakfast may arrive as early 30 minutes before class. Students who disrupt class by arriving after school starts must check in at the office. Please take this seriously and organize your mornings so that your child is on time every day.

Students are required to be in class by start time. Any students arriving after the school start time are considered tardy. Those who arrive after start time **must** report to the office for an admit slip. In severe cases, tardiness may be regarded as truancy and may result in referral to the School Attendance Review Team (SART). If the tardiness is due to an appointment, a note from the doctor's office is required.

Truancy and Unexcused Absences

When students are either absent, unexcused or late unexcused more than 30 minutes for four or more times, they are considered truant. A non-verified absence is considered unexcused.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW TEAM (SART)

The main responsibility of SART is to promote good school attendance and behavior through the use of alternatives to the Juvenile Court system. This process brings together parents, students, school personnel and community agencies to help solve student attendance and/or behavior problems.

A student must be in school to learn. Punctuality and good attendance are attributes that lead to successful performance in all walks of life. WCS will follow the following procedures to ensure that attendance and punctuality are encouraged with all of its students

- The office secretaries will verify each student absence.
- **Truancy Warning Notice** – After at least the third unexcused absence or tardy/early dismissal of 30 minutes or more (or combination of tardy and absence), the parent or guardian will receive a notice.
- **Notification of Truancy #1** - Pursuant to the Education Code, on at least the fifth absence or tardy/early dismissal of 30 minutes or more (or combination of tardy and absence), a “Notification of Truancy” will be sent and a site administrator will contact the parent/guardian.
- **Notification of Truancy #2** - Pursuant to the Education Code, on at least the seventh absence or tardy/early dismissal of 30 minutes or more (or combination of tardy and absence), a second “Notification of Truancy” will be sent and a meeting will be scheduled with the family and site administrator.
- **SART Meeting** - Upon three additional absence(s) or tardies/early dismissals of 30 minutes or more (or a combination), a Site SART meeting will be scheduled to be held to address the attendance issues and an attendance contract will be signed.

- **District Level SARB Meeting** - If the problem persists, a district-level School Attendance Review Board will be scheduled.

Student Absences

All absences require appropriate documentation, i.e., a phone call or note from the parent or guardian, or a note from a doctor or medical facility.

A parent or guardian must notify the schools of an absence no later than 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence, either by telephone, e-mail, or in person. If the school is not notified and the student does not report to school the next day with a note, the absence will be considered unexcused (see below).

Excused Absences

Listed below are the state approved excused absences. Anything other than what is listed below is considered unexcused and will negatively impact your students' attendance record and their academic success.

1. Student illness
 2. Family funeral
 3. Quarantine
 4. Medical or dental appointments
- *Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of the school day.
5. Court appearances by subpoena (child)
 6. Observance of a holiday or religious ceremony with prior approval from the principal

If a child exceeds five excused absences, WCS may require a conference with parent, student, and administration to devise an action plan for ensuring the child does not fall behind in school. After ten excused absences for illness, WCS may require that further absences for illness be verified by a physician.

Unexcused Absences

Listed below are common examples of unexcused absences. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your student's attendance record and their academic success.

1. Visiting or out of town
2. Overslept
3. Too cold or raining
4. Parent is ill
5. Car trouble

If a student has more than three (3) unexcused absences, a meeting between the Principal or designee and the family will be scheduled to determine if WCS is the appropriate placement for the child and family.

Short Term Independent Study Contracts

If a student will be out of school for more than three (3) consecutive days but no more than twenty (20) days, Independent Study (IS) contracts are available to so that the student is still able to get credit. To get an IS contract, a note must be submitted to the office one week prior to the student being gone. This allows the teacher time to gather work and the parent and student time to sign the contract. All work must be completed and turned in the FIRST day that the child returns to class, or the contract will be invalid. Please contact the office for more information. **For more detailed information please refer to Independent Study Policy #07-32 and/or #07-32WCMS in the Board Policies section of this handbook.**

What you can do about your child's attendance.

- Be on time.
- Take vacations during our 14 weeks of "break time" scattered throughout the year
- Avoid unexcused absences
- Make school a priority

Westlake Charter School is a school of choice, please choose to attend daily.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

As a community, we strive to create a nurturing environment that is conducive to learning and respectful of all: parents, staff, students, and surrounding areas. The expectations that follow are set forth to help us be clear about what we expect of ourselves as members of the WCS community.

Hallway/Ramps

- Walk lightly and whisper
- Keep hands/bodies to self
- Keep hallway clear (do not block by talking in a group)
- Stay to the right while walking in the hallway and on ramps
- Place only hands on ramp railing

Assemblies

- Arrive as a class
- Sit immediately
- Set a positive example
- Speak **only** in whisper voices while waiting for assembly to begin
- Be silent on signal
- Use polite audience behavior
- Leave walkway clear
- Sit with the whole group (not off to one side)

Bathroom

- Wait patiently
- Go in one at a time
- Be aware of the time (others may be waiting)
- Throw trash in the trash can
- Use soap to wash hands
- Put only soap and water in the sink
- No sand, pebbles, etc. in the sink or toilet
- Flush after each use
- No playing in the bathroom

Before School

- Arrive no earlier than 7:50 a.m. (Del Paso Campus)/ 7:15 a.m. (Pebblewood Campus)
- Students on campus between 7:50 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. (Del Paso Campus)/ 7:15 a.m. and 7:35a.m. (Pebblewood Campus) must report to the cafeteria
- Students arriving after 8:10 a.m. (Del Paso Campus)/7:35 a.m. (Pebblewood Campus) must report directly to the blacktop for morning line-up
- All schools rules apply

Morning Line Up

- Stand in line with your class facing forward
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Listen and participate
- Be quiet and respectful of others
- All schools rules apply

Afterschool- Students being picked up by car or walking

- Wait quietly with teacher in designated pick up area
- Let teacher know when your ride is here
- Wait patiently for your name to be called
- All schools rules apply

Afterschool- Students enrolled in BASE

- Report to BASE
- Check in with BASE staff
- All schools rules apply

Playground Expectations

Walk quietly in a line with your teacher all the way to the playground

- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- All schools rules apply

Stay on playground where supervisors can see you. This means:

- No playing in and around any garden boxes
- No playing in the rocky areas
- No playing between or behind portables, sheds or buildings
- No going through gates without adult permission
- No playing in the bathroom
- All schools rules apply

Playground equipment is to be used only for the purpose intended

- Jump ropes – jumping only
- Hula hoops – hula hooping and jumping are OK. Tug of war, horsey or anything else that harms kids or hoops – not OK
- Balls –only for organized games

Picnic Table Area

- Do not stand on benches or tables
- Do not sit on tables
- After snack/lunch, throw your trash plus 3 other pieces (“yours plus 3”) in garbage can. No one leaves area until it is clean!
- Play Structure Do not climb on top of monkey bars
- No objects (e.g. cardboard for sliding, jump ropes, hula hoops) on structure
- Down only on slide, No balls (or anything else) on play structure
- Use playground equipment only as intended

Fence

- Don't climb it, kick it or throw balls against it

Trees and other foliage

- Don't climb them, hang from them, pick them or harm them in any way

DISCIPLINE

The purpose of WCSs discipline is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience the benefits of the curriculum in an environment that fosters their potential, self-esteem, and well-being. Because we believe that each student’s **Right to Learn** is so important, we have three general expectations:

Westlake Charter School Student Expectations

- **Be Responsible**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Safe**

Westlake Charter School Matrix

	Safe	Responsible	Respectful
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sit flat in chair - Walking feet - Keep your area neat/clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be prepared for class - Be on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep hands and feet to yourself - Stay in your personal space - Raise a quiet hand - Wait for your turn to talk - Be polite when talking to others
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking feet - Clean your area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay in seat until excused - Eat your own food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise your hand to get up - Quiet voices - Practice good table manners
Campus (walkways, hallways)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking feet - Single file line when walking with class - Hands and feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep campus clean - Throw trash in the garbage - No spitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep hands and feet to yourself - Keep voices off/low in hallways
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking feet - Sit flat in chair - Push chairs in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treat books carefully - Use shelf markers - Return books on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quite voice - Wait your turn - Leave library neat
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay on playground where supervisors can see you - Keep hands and feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use play equipment as intended - Put equipment away - Freeze on first whistle - WALK directly to line on second whistle - Wait in line quietly until your teacher comes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take turns - Follow game rules - Keep from interfering in other games
Morning Drop Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No running or playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go directly to cafeteria or playground depending on time to morning line-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen to adults in charge - Follow adult’s direction
End of day dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No running or playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BASE students report to BASE room - Wait quietly in designated area and watch for your car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen to adults in charge - Follow adult’s direction

WCS Climate

Teachers and staff recognize and support positive student behavior and address negative behavior using conflict resolution and a variety of discipline techniques. Students are supported in learning cooperation, respect, and self-control. We also recognize that every child's temperament is different. Teachers strive to respond to each child in a manner that is effective for that child's particular temperament and developmental level. For example, one child might respond well to a strategy of being asked to move closer to the teacher while another might better benefit from having a few minutes alone to center him/herself.

Expectations for Staff

In order to promote a positive climate at WCS, the staff is committed to the following:

- Recognize all students are capable of appropriate behavior, and all staff accept the responsibility for managing behavior consistently.
- Establish an effective classroom management plan, which includes rules, disciplinary consequences, and positive incentives.
- Model appropriate student behavior both in the classroom and in common areas.
- Take the steps necessary to build trusting relationships with all students.

Exemplifying Positive Behavior

The staff at WCS strive to provide positive reinforcement to students who demonstrate safe and kind behavior at schools. We acknowledge students through individual classroom recognition activities as well as schools-wide programs. We recognize students for their outstanding work, behavior, effort, and attitude.

Westlake's Exceptional Explorers

Students in K-4th grade at WCS can be recognized for exemplary behaviors by receiving Exceptional Explorer Tickets. Faculty members will give tickets to students who demonstrate a trait that is going above and beyond what is expected at school. Upon receiving this certificate, the student can place them in a designated box in each classroom. Every Friday, tickets are pulled and students receive extra prizes and incentives. All tickets are gathered to pull for large prizes at the end of each trimester.

Students in all grade levels who chose to follow classroom and school expectations can receive:

- Teacher Praise
- Parent Contact –“Good News” phone calls/notes home
- Recognition during Morning Line Up
- Earned Extra Free Time
- Character Trait Award

Behaviors We Want to Avoid

Appropriate behavior is discussed, modeled, and practiced in the classroom, at school assemblies, and on the playground. Teachers may choose to use a “card system” or other tool to help students keep track of their own behavior. Classrooms may develop their own standards for behavior and logical consequences consistent with the schools norms. These may also be modified for use during enrichment classes, outdoor activities, and field trips.

If a student chooses to not follow the classroom rules and school expectations, some or all of the following logical consequences may be implemented:

- The student may be redirected and given a reminder about appropriate behavior.
- The student may be asked to move to another location within the learning group.
- The student may be asked to move to a focus table or similar location for a period of time.
- The student may be asked to move to a focus table in another classroom.
- The parent/guardian may be called.
- The student may lose a privilege (such as recess other activity or field trip).
- Assignment time spent before school serving a detention.

In cases of repeated or extreme disruption or unsafe behavior (including but not limited to throwing objects, bullying, destruction of property, profanity, obscenity, cheating, lying), some or all of the following steps may be implemented.

- Referral to the office.
- Parent conference with the teacher and/or principal.
- Student behavior agreement.
- Assignment related to learning self-discipline and responsibility.
- Modification of a student’s day or activity.
- Exceptional Explorer tickets revoked.
- One or multiple detentions issued before school or during recess
- Convening a SST (Student Study Team) meeting.
- School Behavior Citation

There are circumstances when students demonstrate behaviors that are a violation of the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils Policy. The previous interventions may be bypassed and a suspension or expulsion may be issued based on the severity of the infraction and/or when other means of correction fail to bring about proper behavior. **Please see our Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils Policy #07-31 in the Board Policies Section of this handbook for additional information.**

DETENTION

In order to offer outstanding learning experiences for all students at WCS, students are to understand and adopt the WCS Student Expectations and Discipline Policy.

The school recognizes that students need to grow and mature. Part of growth involves making positive academic and lifestyle decisions or choices. In the event that students' decisions are contrary to WCS's student expectations and standards, students will be held accountable and consequences will be imposed. Assignment time spent before schools serving a detention may be one of the consequences.

Detention will have two primary objectives for students.

1. Detention should demonstrate students are held accountable for their actions.
2. Detention should help to modify and change behavior. Students learn to self-regulate.

The purpose of detention is to impress upon the students the fact that they are responsible for their behavior and completion of their work. Students are able to take credit for their successes involving good behavior and completion of work. Likewise, students should learn to take responsibility for their unsuccessful efforts or actions.

Reasons for detention include but are not limited to the following:

- **Late homework** - defined as homework not turned in when requested by the teacher. Homework turned in to the office by parents after the start of school may be considered late or incomplete work.
 - Grades 1-5** - A detention will be assigned when a fourth incomplete or late assignment occurs and for each subsequent late or incomplete assignment. Classes that assign weekly homework packets, each packet equals 4 individual assignments.
 - Middle School** –
 - 1 late assignment – lunch detention
 - 4 late assignments – Friday morning detention with parent or guardian present
 - 6 late assignments – Parent/student/teacher conference with principal & academic contract
- Disruptive behavior that interferes with schools purposes or educational processes.
- Attendance – (all grades) Students may be assigned detention for excessive tardies and/or unexcused absences. Detention will be assigned as follows:
 - 3 unexcused tardies - lunch detention 15 minutes (5 min for each tardy)
 - 6 unexcused tardies - before school detention
 - 2 Unexcused absences – lunch detention 20 minutes (10 minutes for each absence)
 - 4 Unexcused absences – before school detention

Under normal circumstances, a student will be given a warning and possibly other in-schools consequences (see **Behaviors We Want to Avoid**, page 18 of this Handbook) before being assigned a detention. They will be warned that further behavior of the same type will result in a detention. However, if the behavior problem is severe enough, the student may be assigned a detention without a prior warning.

Detention Procedures:

1. A Detention Notice will be sent home to inform the parent of the problem. The notice will include the date for the detention to be served. Parents are to sign the notice and send it back to schools **the next day** with their child.
2. If a student is asked to take a Detention Notice home and the student fails to return this signed form the next day, additional consequences may be assigned. If the form is not returned signed, the teacher will call the parents and arrange the dates for the detention to be served.
3. **Detentions will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in the Library on the Del Paso Campus and a teacher's classroom on the Pebblewood Campus.** Students assigned to detention on the Del Paso Campus are to report to the **library** promptly at **7:45 a.m.** Students assigned to detention on the Pebblewood Campus are to report to the **office** promptly at **7:15 a.m.** A designated staff member will be supervising students.
4. If a student skips an assigned detention period for any reason other than illness, an additional detention will be assigned. If a student is disruptive during a detention, an additional detention will be assigned.

Suspension and Expulsion of Students

Westlake Charter School believes in progressive discipline as a means to ensuring due process, intervention, and fairness to the disciplinary process. However, Westlake Charter School is committed first and foremost to the health and safety of our students and staff; and second to creating the strongest possible learning and teaching environment free from the distractions of poor student behavior.

In cases where other discipline measures outlined previously have been attempted and exhausted or where circumstances warrant swift and strong consequences a student may be suspended or expelled. **Please see our Suspension and Expulsion of Student Policy #07-31 in the Board Policies Section of this handbook for additional information.**

Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination & Bullying

WCS believes all students have the right to a safe and civil learning environment. Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to a hostile school environment. As such, WCS prohibits any acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying related to school activity or school attendance. **Please see our Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination & Bullying Policy #0812-01 in the Board Policies Section of this handbook for additional information.**

WCS is committed to providing a positive and safe learning environment. Parents, students, and staff must work as a team to prepare students to be responsible, caring citizens. We will be focusing on this in various ways throughout the year. We ask you to reinforce and promote these qualities at home as well. Students and parents are required to sign the "Parent/Student Handbook and Behavior Acknowledgement" on the last page of this handbook and return it to the school.

HOMEWORK

Our Beliefs

WCS educators recognize that meaningful homework with timely feedback contributes toward building student responsibility, self-regulation, and life-long learning habits, and that appropriate homework can affect a student's ability to meet state academic expectations as well as preparing them for the rigors of middle schools, high schools, college, and the competitive world of work.

Research indicates that meaningful purposes of homework may include:

- Developing independent study habits
- Building and strengthening bonds between home and schools
- Practicing research skills
- Promoting oral and silent reading
- Providing feedback to teachers and students about student learning and achievement
- Providing independent practice of skills learned in class

Research shows that regardless of student ability or prior knowledge, the amount of time students devote to homework increases their achievement.

Time Allotments

The time allotment to homework should increase from grade to grade. The following is a list of approximate daily time allotments (may vary according to the child):

- Grades K-1: up to 20 minutes per night
 - (+15 minutes of reading/being read to and 5 minutes of basic math fact practice)
- Grades 2-3: up to 35 minutes per night
 - (+25 minutes of reading/being read to and 8 minutes of basic math fact practice)
- Grades 4-5: up to 60 minutes per night
 - (+35 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of basic math fact practice)
- Grades 6-8: up to 80 minutes per night (may increase for in-depth on long term projects)
 - (+35 minutes of reading)

When enough time has been allowed in school for classwork, and that work has not been completed, it may be assigned as homework, thereby exceeding the recommended daily time allotted to homework.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Provide meaningful practice of lessons presented during the school day
- Provide homework to preview, reinforce, review, or expand upon what is taught in the classroom.
- Provide home assignments that are specific and have clearly understood expectations
- Notify the parents when a student becomes negligent in the completion of assignments
- Missing assignments may result in detention

Student Responsibilities

- Be aware of assignments and seek further explanation if needed
- Use homework agendas if provided
- Bring home all necessary worksheets, books, etc.
- Organize his/her time to work on assignments
- Turn assignments in on time
- Turn in assignments reflecting high standards of quality and completeness
- Missing assignments may result in detention

Parent Responsibilities

While the student should assume the major responsibility for completing homework assignments, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the student's homework by:

- Providing a study area that is quiet, comfortable, and free of major disturbances
- Providing a definite time for study
- Making available, if possible, such resource materials as reference books, magazines, newspapers, and a dictionary
- Assisting students with drills
- Checking the student's work for neatness and legibility
- Communicating problems/concerns regarding homework with the teacher in a timely manner
- Missing assignments may result in detention

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Standards for Parents at Westlake Charter

It is my responsibility to ensure that:

- I commit to supporting the mission of WCS by volunteering in one or more of the areas of participation listed below.
- I attend all Town Hall Meetings
- I attend Parent-Teacher Conferences and Back to School Night
- I model speaking and acting respectfully to every person at school
- My child arrives at schools at least 5 minutes before the start of school
- My child is picked up on time at the end of the day
- My child is supervised after school and held to schools rules
- My child completes all homework assignments on time
- My child arrives at school prepared each day
- I notify the school by 8:30 am to report an absence
- My child gets the proper amount of sleep every night
- My child is given appropriate boundaries for their behavior

ALSO, for your information:

- Please do not interfere with teacher prep time by dropping by the classroom before and after school without a prior appointment
- Please be conscious of teachers' personal time. These are ways to communicate:
 - Email (addresses are on the website)
 - Call school and leave a message with a number at which you can be reached during the day and at night
 - Leave a note in the office
- Please do not interrupt class to talk to a teacher during the school day (Leave a note in the teacher's box in the office)
- Dealing with issues regarding our children can be very emotional. When it feels that way, please make an appointment to talk with the appropriate person, rather than getting visibly and verbally upset toward another, venting to someone else, or talking in front of children. Staff members at Westlake Charter are committed to hearing parent concerns and working to find win/win solutions.
- If you feel that your conversation with the appropriate person did not resolve the issue, make an appointment to meet with administration.

Homework Suggestion

- Create a routine time and place free of distractions
- Check your child's homework, your positive attention helps them stay motivated.

Parent Involvement

Participating in our children's education and developing the strong sense of community that comes from working with others toward a common goal are central to the mission and vision of WCS. Parents' active participation is vital to the challenging work of educating all children at WCS.

Our goal is to have all families involved in the community in a way that is meaningful both to the family and the school. We ask families to contribute 30 hours per school year, or 10 hours a trimester, in the classroom or an equivalent amount of time serving on a committee.

WCS partners with parents in order to achieve its mission. By choosing to enroll your child, you value that partnership and you are willing to be an active community member.

Parent Participation

Honoring the commitment to volunteer at WCS is the way members of the school community demonstrate their belief in the philosophy of the school and educational practices, as well as their understanding of the vital role they play in the implementation of WCS's philosophy. The success of WCS depends upon the strength and involvement of the community in support of the school.

By honoring the commitment to volunteer, parents also see the importance of the following activities:

- 30 Hours of volunteer time per year in the classroom, on a committee or doing a school-support job. (If you need clarification concerning hours please talk to the Parent Participation Coordinator.)
- Regular attendance at **Town Hall Meetings**, and **Back to Schools Night, Parent Teacher Conferences**.

Avenues for Participation

Classroom Participation

Teachers depend on parents and plan their daily schedules based upon which parents will be in the classroom (*e.g.* a teacher may plan 3 learning centers if she knows she will have one parent, a TA and herself). It is therefore essential that parents come when they are scheduled and arrive on time. Parents who work in the classroom typically work a consistent, scheduled time each week. Tasks vary depending upon the teacher's needs, but may include such activities as working with an individual or small group of children, leading a learning center, "floating" to assist children as the need arises, or helping to prepare classroom materials.

Room Parent

Each class has a room parent representative. The room parent serves as a liaison between the teacher and parent community. Tasks may include scheduling class volunteers, delegating class support jobs, classroom communication coordinator, organizing classroom item donations, and field trip planning.

School Support Jobs

There are two types of school support jobs – “ongoing” and “on-call.” Ongoing jobs are activities that are scheduled on a regular basis, such as helping in the office 3 hours per week, picking up litter in the play yard each morning, regularly providing childcare for the younger sibling of a child whose parent is working in the class, and teaching a weekly elective. On-call jobs include such activities as building a shelf for a classroom, working at special events, garden maintenance, and attending a workday to help paint the classrooms.

Fundraising

All families at the school are asked to participate in fundraising events. Hours worked are counted toward a family’s total volunteer hours for the year. Fundraising events include our Annual Golf Tournament, Olympic Triathlon, and International Festival.

Parents enroll their children at WCS by choice and with the understanding that parent participation is a vital aspect of the program. If some families find it difficult to get involved, we will work with them to find opportunities that fit their family’s needs. WCS is committed to working creatively with families to solve the problems they may face and helping them to find their niche for participation at the school.

Parent Visitation Agreement

While WCS encourages parents/guardians and interested members of the community to visit and view the educational program, WCS also endeavors to create a safe environment for students and staff. Additionally, parents volunteering in the classroom can be extremely helpful to our teachers and valuable to our students. We thank all parents for their willingness to volunteer in this manner.

To ensure the safety of students and staff as well as to minimize interruption of the instructional program, the board has established a policy, pursuant to California Penal Code Sections 627, et. seq., to facilitate visits during regular schools days.

Please see our School Visitation and Volunteer Policy #07-13 in the Board Policies Section of this handbook for additional information.

Communication between Family and School

Parents may have specific concerns about their child's program. Communication is the key to resolving these issues. The following procedure is set up to facilitate communication with the involved parties.

1. TALK TO THE TEACHER FIRST. Besides you, the teacher has the most direct contact with your child.
2. Talk with the principal.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the principal will contact other appropriate school officials.
4. If there is no acceptable resolution then the parent/guardian may file a formal complaint. **Please see the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures #08-01 and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures #08-03, in the Board Policies Section of this handbook, for additional information.**

Parent/Teacher Conference

This is an important time for parents and teachers to share their insights on their child's growth. Conferences will be scheduled twice yearly, at the end of first and second trimesters.

Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall Meetings are held occasionally and provide an opportunity for information sharing and ongoing participation in the development of the program.

School Newsletter

The School Newsletter is published each month to apprise the community of what's happening at the school. The Newsletter can be found on our website at the beginning of each month.

ConnectEd

A ConnectEd message will be sent via telephone and email for updates. Please let the office know of any changes in the email address or phone numbers for your family.

Non-Disclosure Policy

Student and family contact information (telephone number, address, and email) will not be released in accordance with applicable law.

Parent-Initiated Communication

Ongoing parent-teacher communication is vital to your child's well-being. Personal and confidential concerns about your child should be directed to your child's teacher. Please check with your teacher to determine the best time for these communications.

Student Class Assignments

When assigning students to specific classrooms, the principal or designee shall strive to provide the best possible learning environment for each student. Insofar as possible, consideration shall be given to:

- Recommendations of the current classroom teacher.
- Gender and ethnic balance.
- Academic balance of high, medium, and low achievers.
- Balance of students with social or emotional needs.
- Strengths of individual teachers.
- Student's interests, readiness, behavior, and motivation.

During the school year, the principal or designee may make any adjustments in class placement, which he/she considers beneficial to the student or the educational program.

Every year, much thought is put into the development of class lists and the assignment of students to teachers. Many factors are considered in this process including, but not limited to, academic and social skills, class size, special needs, and students that need to be separated from each other. Class lists are posted prior to the first day of school for the convenience of students and parents.

If parents have a concern regarding their child's placement, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Allow two (2) weeks for student adjustment to class.
2. Conference with the teacher following the end of the second week of placement.
3. Submit the concern(s) in writing to the schools' principal.
4. Meet with the school principal to discuss the concern(s).

Following the conference between the parents and the principal, the principal or designee will make the final decision as to what course of action will be in the best interest of all involved.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Examinations

Each student enrolling in the School as a kindergartner will be required to provide evidence of a Health and Dental examination by a medical doctor. In addition any students entering WCS in other grades will need to provide Health and Dental examination records upon enrollment. If these examinations pose a financial hardship to your family please contact the school.

Immunizations

Each student shall present his/her immunization record certifying that he/she has received all required immunizations currently due, or shall present an exemption as allowable by law before he/she is admitted to WCS. If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs in the school community, un-immunized students may be excluded from school for an extended period of time.

Health Testing

The School will administer tests for vision, and hearing, as required by law. Parents will be notified before a test is given and may request that their child be exempted from the test.

Medications

All medications must be kept in the office at all times. If it is necessary for a student to take a prescription or over-the-counter medication (including cough drops and vitamins) during school hours, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Parent or guardian submits doctor's written directive including:
 - The student's name
 - When medication is to be given
 - How much and how often it should be given
 - How long the student will be taking the medication
 - Doctor's signature and phone number in case of questions
2. Prescription medications must be in the pharmacy-labeled container. (Pharmacies will give you an additional container upon request if some doses will be taken at school.) Remember to include dosing spoons or other necessary equipment.
3. Records are kept by school personnel stating student's name, medication dosage, time taken, and signature of the person administering it.

Student Illness

Please keep your child home from school if any of the following conditions are present:

- Fever >100°F within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Rashes (until diagnosed as non-contagious)
- Conjunctivitis (an eye infection also known as “pink eye”)
- Contagious diseases (measles, chicken pox, strep-throat, impetigo, etc.)
- Contagious parasites (lice, pinworms, scabies, etc.)

A teacher will not accept a child who shows any of these signs of illness into the classroom. Please notify WCS immediately of any infectious diseases or conditions your child may have so other parents can be notified of possible exposure to a contagious disease.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency (fire, earthquake, storm, etc.), all staff will remain at the school until all children are home, in a place of safety, or released to parents/guardians unless directed otherwise. Teachers will keep their classes in their rooms unless directed otherwise by an administrator or designated lead teacher. Teachers will remain with their classes and are responsible for accounting for each child in their class. Teachers will be responsible for signing out children to parents or other designated adults.

Telephones/Communications

In the event of an earthquake, flood, or other natural disaster, keep your radios tuned to your local radio station for advisory information. Please do not call the school, as we must have the lines open for emergency calls. Information from the schools will be distributed to families via the ConnectEd telephone system. Should there be a major disaster, children will remain under the supervision of Westlake Charter authorities until parents or guardian can pick them up.

FIELD LESSONS

At WCS, we believe that learning extends beyond the four walls of the school. Sacramento, the local bay area, and beyond have many resources to offer our children. Field lessons, when used for teaching and learning, provide educationally sound and important enhancements to the instructional program.

A field lesson permission form is signed by parents/guardians before each field lesson. Parental permission shall include written consent from parents/guardians authorizing the supervisors to arrange for necessary medical treatment.

The teacher will provide parents and guardians with information concerning the purpose and destination of the field lesson, transportation, eating arrangements, date and time of departure, estimated time of return, arrangements for supervision, cost to the student, safety precautions (if applicable), and a detailed itinerary when the field lesson will extend beyond the schools day.

Chaperones on a field trip serve as classroom aides. Chaperone responsibilities generally include:

- Keeping track of your assigned group at all times
- Helping the students and teachers with their assignments
- Following all schedules and designated time frames set by the teachers
- Being aware of and enforcing school rules and specific field trip site rules
- Enforcing general public manners: no running or loud voices without permission
- Ensuring bathroom safety: have children use the bathroom in pairs and check to see that the environment is safe before allowing children to enter
- Ask the teacher before purchasing treats for all students – please do not purchase treats for just one group of students

BOARD POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK AND BEHAVIOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

August 2013

Dear Parents & Students,

Each year, Westlake Charter Schools publishes a Parent/Student Handbook with information on policies, procedures, programs, and discipline expectations. The information contained in this document is important and serves as a valuable reference for you regarding your child's educational experience at Westlake Charter Schools.

Please review the handbook and then sign and return this form to confirm that you have been made aware of the information found in the Parent/Student Handbook. Please keep the handbook at home for future reference.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Please have your child return this form to their classroom teacher (Grades K-6) or homeroom teacher (Grades 6-8). Thank you!

Student's Last name

Student's First name

Grade

Classroom/Homeroom Teacher

I have received, read and understand the information contained in the Westlake Charter Schools Student/Parent Handbook.

Parent's Signature

Date

Student's Signature

Date