



# Westlake

## CHARTER SCHOOL

**Home of the Explorers**

2024-2025 Family Handbook

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## Table of Contents

<b>Handbook Disclaimer</b>	2
<b>School Design Pillars</b>	3
<b>Core Values</b>	4
<b>Communication</b>	5
<b>Attendance</b>	7
<b>Academics</b>	8
<b>School Culture</b>	11
<b>Get Involved</b>	16
<b>Student Technology Use Guidelines</b>	18
<b>Health and Safety</b>	20



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### **HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER:**

Westlake Charter School 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 legislation 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 appropriate 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 Westlake Charter School board policies. To view the board policies in their entirety, please refer to the Westlake Charter School website at [www.westlakecharter.com/board\\_docs.policies.php](http://www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php).

### **Westlake Charter School Mission Statement**

We demonstrate what is possible when school and community collaborate to create inspiring adults with the academic and social-emotional readiness to lead as Global Citizens.

### **Home of the Explorers**

At Westlake Charter School, we place great value on the development of our school community. Our school's mascot is the Everest the Explorer, which helps to define the core purpose of our school. We expect our Explorer students, staff, and families to explore what is possible. Throughout this handbook, you will often see the term Explorer used interchangeably with the word student or used to identify members of our community, such as Explorer Staff, Explorer Families, etc.



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## **SCHOOL DESIGN PILLARS:**

Westlake Charter School identifies four pillars of a strong school community. These values play an important part in building and supporting the school's culture. By focusing our school on these principles, our school creates a learning community in which students can develop the skills necessary for future success in any endeavor.

### **1. Our Place in a Global World**

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Our Place in a Global World* by providing our students, whom we often refer to as Explorers, with the skills necessary to embrace cultural diversity. We use the strength of our families and their cultures to enrich the learning that happens in class. Students are involved in a spirit of mutual respect on and off-campus. Community members are actively involved in discussing and understanding current events and global topics. Students at Westlake Charter School are citizens of the world and are empowered to embrace the mindset that they can make a difference in the world.

### **2. Enriched Educational Opportunities**

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Enriched Educational Opportunities* by recognizing that all Explorers benefit from experiences that go beyond the core subject areas. We provide Art, Physical Education, and Spanish instruction through specialized teachers. Classroom teachers also implement lessons that integrate character traits and social development. We offer quality after school enrichment programs and provide activities that are hands-on, technology-infused, and Explorer centered. These enhanced educational opportunities cultivate globally-minded, reflective Explorers.

### **3. Personalization**

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Personalization* by providing a rigorous and challenging program for all Explorers based on their individual academic and social needs. Our teachers have a vested interest in the development of each Explorer and strive to incorporate a wide array of teaching techniques to support individual learning. Explorer assessment data is used to guide instruction. Teachers include small and collaborative grouping to modify activities for individual Explorers. We utilize the skills and talents of our parent volunteers to support differentiation within our classrooms. Our program is Explorer centered, thematic, and project-based.

### **4. Teachers as Designers**


Westlake Charter School focuses on *Teachers as Designers* by empowering shared leadership among its staff in order to build a culture of high expectations. Within a collaborative work environment, teachers strive to ensure the success of each Explorer. Teachers are expected to be reflective practitioners and work in Professional Learning Communities to develop an innovative, authentic, and rigorous learning environment. Through thoughtful instructional design, teachers create curriculum and learning opportunities that support Common Core Standards while incorporating a thematic and project-based approach.



**CORE VALUES:**

At Westlake Charter School, we use our Core Values as the fabric that weaves together the demand for academic and social-emotional readiness called for in our mission statement. Each month our students and staff focus on a Core Value of the Month. During this time, instruction is designed to help students realize each Core Value: Academically, Personally, Within our Community, and as a Digital Citizen. After initial instruction of each core value, our staff spends time celebrating our students for their work toward bringing these values to life within our community.

**Core Values**

 <b>Westlake</b> <small>CHARTER SCHOOL</small>	<b>Demonstrated through:</b>  Positive Decision Making	<b>Demonstrated through:</b>  Self Awareness	<b>Demonstrated through:</b>  Social Awareness	<b>Demonstrated through:</b>  Digital Citizenship
<b>Respect</b>	Recognizing when it's time to listen and time to collaborate.	Believing in your ability to be successful.	Considering others by making safe choices.	Showing positive online communication.
<b>Excellence</b>	Trying your best to solve problems.	Setting high expectations for yourself when working with others.	Demonstrating leadership by valuing the perspectives of others.	Using devices correctly
<b>Responsibility</b>	Finding value in completing your work to the best of your ability.	Being mindful of your feelings and actions.	Communicating effectively with others.	Keeping personal information secure
<b>Gratitude</b>	Reflecting on your participation during class.	Setting time aside to appreciate those who help you.	Acknowledging the gifts within your community.	Using technology to show gratitude towards others
<b>Inquiry</b>	Identifying opportunities to solve problems.	Seeking areas for self improvement.	Collaborating with others to extend your learning.	Identifying high quality sites
<b>Joyful Learning</b>	Evaluating the importance of your growth mindset.	Motivating yourself to explore new things.	Showing pride for our school.	Creating a positive online identity
<b>Global Perspective</b>	Thinking about ways to include everyone.	Being proud to tell the story of your culture.	Appreciating the diversity of your neighborhood.	Collaborating with others worldwide in a safe manner.



<b>Stewardship</b>	Identifying ways to improve our school.	Making healthy choices for your body and mind.	Solving problems by lending a helping hand.	Knowing how to search and give credit in the proper ways.
<b>Perseverance</b>	Assessing whether you have given your personal best.	Trying your best even when things are difficult.	Being a flexible thinker when faced with challenges.	Staying true to yourself online.
<b>Reflection</b>	Reviewing your past challenges and successes.	Recognizing your strengths.	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others.	Understanding your growth this past year as a digital citizen.

**COMMUNICATION:**

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of Perseverance through our clear and consistent communication. We know that each family desires to be connected to the school community, and our communications are designed to make that easy.

**Westlake Weekly:**

The Westlake Weekly is a school communication which is posted to our website each week. Once the Westlake Weekly is published, each Westlake Family will receive a weekly phone call and email, directing you to access the Westlake Weekly. Please contact the front office if you are not receiving the weekly phone call and/or email.

**Teacher Newsletters:**

All classroom teachers send out a newsletter with updates from their classrooms at least once a month. Specialty teachers each have a website which will be updated with classroom information weekly. Links to all teacher websites can be found on our school website under the teacher tab. Please reach out to the teacher directly if you are not receiving consistent communication and then with anyone on our administrative team if unresolved.

**Social Media:**

Westlake Charter School uses social media such as X, Facebook, and Instagram to celebrate our students, staff, and programs. We hope that you will follow our communications using these mediums and help to promote our school in a positive manner. Just as we teach the students the value of a positive online presence, our school models positivity online and expects our entire Explorer Community to model appropriate social media use as well.



**Who to contact for what:**

Classroom Teacher(s)	First Contact for all academic or social-emotional concerns and any questions regarding your student's academic progress
Specialty Teacher	First contact for all questions and/or concerns about your student's academic, behavioral, or social/emotional progress in the areas of PE, Spanish, or Art
Dean of Students	Contact for office behavior referrals
Assistant Principal	Contact for behavior office referrals, student and staff concerns, BASE, or After School Live (including sports, enrichment)
Principal	Contact regarding school policies, daily operations, or with student/staff questions or concerns unresolved by Assistant Principal
Director of Student Support Services	Contact for questions Section 504 Plans, Multi-tiered Systems of Support (including, but not limited to Counseling, Interventions & Supports, etc.), GATE, English Language Learners.
Coordinator of Special Education	Contact for questions related to Special Education services
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Contact for questions regarding local and statewide assessment and curriculum and instruction.
Executive Director	Contact for questions related to the Board of Directors

**Dispute Resolution:**

After seeking a resolution to any concern by following the communication chain outlined above, if there is no acceptable resolution, 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. Please refer to the Westlake Charter School website at [www.westlakecharter.com/board\\_docs.policies.php](http://www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php).



## Attendance

Respect – Excellence – **Responsibility** – Gratitude – Inquisitive – Joyful Learning – Global Perspective – Stewardship – Perseverance – Reflective

Westlake Charter School families and staff demonstrate the Core Value of Responsibility by using the academic calendar and bell schedule to ensure that their Explorer is in every class, on time, and ready to learn every day.

### **Attendance:**

When your child is going to be absent OR tardy, please contact the school office before 8:00 AM and leave a message on the Attendance Line (916-567-5760 ext.1) or email [attendance@westlakecharter.com](mailto:attendance@westlakecharter.com) with the following information:

1. Student's first and last name
2. Teacher's name
3. Your relationship to the child
4. Reason for absence or tardy

When your child returns to school, please send a written excuse. If your child is marked absent and you have not contacted us by telephone, the office will contact you for verification and the reason for the absence. Excused absences are defined by the California Department of Education as student illness, bereavement of an immediate family member, or a student's medical appointment. Any other reason for your Explorer's absence is recorded as an unexcused absence.

### **Tardies:**

Explorers are required to be in a class by the start time. Those who arrive after the start time must report to the office for an admit slip. If the tardiness is due to an appointment, a note from the doctor's office is requested. Please make every effort to organize your mornings so that your child is on time every day.





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### **Early Dismissal:**

If your child must leave school early because of a health appointment, please notify the classroom teacher(s) in advance, and upon picking up, please sign your child out in the office. Please try to schedule appointments during non-school hours whenever possible. A student cannot be called to the office prior to the parent/guardian's arrival in the office.

### **Independent Study:**

If your child will be out of school for three or more consecutive days, Independent Study (IS) contracts may be available so that the Explorer is still able to get credit for attendance. Please contact the office for more information. Completed Independent Study packet must be received at least five school days prior to student absence. Independent Study will not be offered during the last month of the school term.

## **Academics**

Respect – **Excellence** – Responsibility – Gratitude – **Inquisitive** – Joyful Learning – Global Perspective – Stewardship – Perseverance – Reflective

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of Excellence by providing a unique educational opportunity to each student based on our four educational design pillars.

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of Inquisitive by leading Explorers to dig into their studies and to guide them to wonder, through thematic units and project-based learning opportunities. The vision that guides the Westlake Charter School academic program is documented in the WCS Charter that is regularly reviewed and approved by both the Westlake Charter and Natomas Unified School Boards.

### **Progress Reports:**

Explorers receive a progress report halfway through each trimester. Any questions regarding marks on the progress report should be directed to the classroom or specialty teacher.

### **Conferences:**

Every family will attend a conference to discuss the Academic and Social-Emotional progress of their Explorer during the first and second trimester. Refer to the academic calendar for conference week dates. Information for scheduling conferences will be shared in the Westlake Weekly.

### **Report Cards:**

Explorers receive a report card three times a year, at the end of each trimester. First and second-trimester report cards are distributed during conferences. Third-trimester report cards are distributed on the last day of school.



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### **Infinite Campus:**

Attendance information for each student can be accessed through the Parent Portal on Infinite Campus. Any questions about logging into the Infinite Campus Parent Portal can be emailed to [admin@westlakecharter.com](mailto:admin@westlakecharter.com).

### **Illuminate:**

Academic data for each 4th-8th grade student can be accessed through the Parent Portal in Illuminate. Any questions about logging into the Infinite Campus Parent Portal can be emailed to [admin@westlakecharter.com](mailto:admin@westlakecharter.com).

### **Reading Intervention:**

Westlake Charter School provides targeted intervention in phonics, reading, and English language development for Explorers in Kindergarten through 8th grade. These intervention groups are ongoing throughout the year and embedded within the school day. Utilizing assessment data, intervention groups are organized by the classroom teacher(s) in collaboration with Student Support Services.

### **Child Find:**

We are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. The School provides special education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA"), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the El Dorado County Office of Education Charter SELPA. These services are available for special education students enrolled at the School. We offer high-quality educational programs and services for all our students in accordance with the assessed needs of each student. The School collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, in order to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

### **GATE:**

Westlake Charter School provides differentiated learning opportunities during the regular school day to support all students, including students who have been identified to participate in GATE (Gifted and Talented Education). Differentiation is an effective approach to teaching and learning. Differentiation is not a new concept, but is based on best practices in education. Strategies used may include, but are not limited to flexible grouping, acceleration, in-depth study, complexity, and novelty. Students who have met the criteria to be identified for GATE are also invited to participate in the lunchtime GATE program for additional learning opportunities. Promoting academic excellence, independent thinking, student responsibility, and self-confidence are key components of our program.



### 8th Grade End-of-Year Events:

To celebrate their hard work and promotion to high school, we host special end-of-year events for our 8th grade Explorers:

- **8th Grade Dance** - May 2025
- **Santa Cruz Overnight Field Lesson** - May/June 2025
- **8th Grade Breakfast** - June 2025
- **Promotion** - June 2025

There is also an optional Washington, D.C./New York trip for 8th graders. *While this is not a school program, it is organized with the help of the staff. If you would like your student to participate in this fee-based program, please contact our Assistant Principal.*

Student Requirements to Attend 8th Grade Events	
<b>Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students with multiple behavior infractions/Ed Code violations may be subject to a mandatory behavioral contract or removal from 8th grade events as deemed by administrative staff.</li></ul>
<b>Academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students with unexcused IEs on benchmarks by mid-May 2025 may be required to participate in an academic contract to fulfill requirements to participate in this field lesson or may be removed from these activities as determined by administration.</li></ul>

*If, at any point, a student becomes ineligible for an event, a member of the administration team will inform the student and their family.*



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## School Culture

Respect – Excellence – Responsibility – Gratitude – Inquisitive – **Joyful Learning** – Global Perspective – Stewardship – Perseverance – **Reflective**

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of Joyful Learning through Responsive Classroom practices in all of our K-8 learning spaces which focus on building a safe learning community for all of our Explorers.

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of being Reflective through guiding Explorers to learn from past experiences and successes, by regular celebration of Explorers' accomplishments, and with logical consequences as a response to misbehavior.

The Responsive Classroom Model is used in all of our classrooms, Kindergarten-8th grade. Responsive Classroom is an approach to elementary and middle school education that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a safe school community.

### **What you will see in a Responsive Classroom Learning Space:**

#### **Morning Meeting K-5**

Explorers greet one another, share news, and participate in an activity. The practice of Morning Meeting builds the community in the core K-5th classroom. Throughout the year it gives each Explorer a place to feel safe and show their true self.

#### **Advisory 6-8**

Every Explorer in 6th-8th grade will meet with their Advisory teacher four mornings a week at 8:15 AM. Advisory classes will stay together as a group for all three years. Advisory promotes communication and coordination between home and school. Families will also meet twice a year with their Explorer's Advisory teacher for the 1st and 2nd trimester Explorer-led conferences.

#### **Rule Creation**

Explorers help create classroom rules that allow all members of the classroom community to reach their learning goals.

#### **Interactive Modeling**

Explorers are explicitly taught to notice and practice expected behaviors in order to demonstrate and internalize them.

#### **Positive Teacher Language**

Adults use carefully selected, respectful words and tone to promote active learning and self-discipline.



### Logical Consequences

Adults respond to misbehavior in a way that respects children, guides them to recognize the effects of their actions, and helps them develop internal controls.

### Behavior Management

The Response to Misbehavior Model in practice at Westlake Charter School is in line with our Responsive Classroom practices and relies upon clear logical consequences for all levels of misbehavior.

Low	Possible Staff Response
<p>Examples of low-level misbehavior include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interrupting</li> <li>● Disregarding/not following directions (more isolated, non-recurring cases)</li> <li>● Inappropriate language</li> <li>● Disrespect of staff and peers</li> <li>● Distracting others</li> <li>● Play fighting</li> <li>● Low-level theft (snacks, pens, toys)</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of technology</li> </ul> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Recurring low-level behavior issues might result in further review to support that Explorer.</i></li> <li>● <i>Persistent low-level behaviors may require medium-level responses.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proactive strategies (positive reinforcement, redirection, reminding)</li> <li>● Restorative Justice - Explorer directed to make amends for the situation</li> <li>● Verbal warning</li> <li>● Natural/logical consequence (loss of privilege)</li> <li>● Reset protocol (Defined break time in a separate setting, such as a buddy classroom)</li> <li>● Family communication (May include Ongoing Family communication agreement )</li> </ul>
Medium	Possible Staff Response
<p>Examples of medium level misbehavior include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular and outward defiance &amp; disrespect of staff and peers</li> <li>● Emotional disrespect (i.e. repeated exclusion, teasing)</li> <li>● Encouraging or engaging in physical disrespect (i.e. intentional pushing, tripping, challenging someone to fight, encouraging others to fight)</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers and staff will use low-level response possibilities when appropriate. At teacher or staff discretion, an office referral may be submitted. If a referral is submitted, the situation <i>may</i> be remediated by the office through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low-level response options</li> <li>● Notifying and engaging parents in corrective action</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic dishonesty</li> <li>● Signs of early patterned bullying (i.e. threats, intimidation)</li> <li>● Low-level vandalism/destruction of property</li> <li>● Recurring disruptive emotional outbursts</li> <li>● Inappropriate behavior by means of an electronic act</li> </ul> <p><i>Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Recurring medium-level referrals may result in collaboration with the MTSS team to review data and develop supports/interventions including individual behavior management plans.</i></li> <li>● <i>Several recurring medium-level referrals may be escalated to a severe designation if not remediated.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Note: All office referral forms will be kept on file in the WCS office. For other Explorers involved in an incident or on the receiving end of disrespectful behavior, WCS staff will support the child and may communicate with families to inform them and to describe the action plan.</i></p>
<p><b>Severe</b></p>	<p><b>Possible Staff Response</b></p>
<p>Examples of severe misbehavior include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willful violence/fighting resulting in physical injury</li> <li>● Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco</li> <li>● Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property</li> <li>● Use of racial slurs/comments with the intent to harass, intimidate, discriminate, and bully</li> <li>● Property damage/vandalism</li> <li>● Severe disruption/defiance/obscenity/profanity/harassment</li> <li>● Bullying (including by means of an electronic act)</li> <li>● Hazing</li> <li>● Witness harassment or intimidation</li> <li>● Possession and brandishing of a dangerous object (including imitation firearms)</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers and staff will use low or medium-level response possibilities when appropriate. At teacher or staff discretion, an office referral may be submitted. If a referral is submitted, the situation <i>may</i> be remediated by the office through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low or medium-level response options</li> <li>● Notifying and engaging parents in corrective action</li> <li>● Restorative Practices</li> <li>● Other corrective actions</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: All office referral forms will be kept on file in the WCS office. For other Explorers involved in an incident or on the receiving end of disrespectful behavior, WCS staff will support the child and may communicate with families to inform them and to describe the action plan.</i></p>



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Hate violence or speech (Motivated by, but not limited to, disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation)</li><li>● Terroristic threats</li><li>● Inappropriate sexual behavior</li></ul> |  |
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### **Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying :**

All Explorers have the right to a safe and civil learning environment. Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors that interfere with Explorers' ability to learn, negatively affect Explorer 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. Families and students have the ability to report bullying behavior through our bullying report button located on the Westlake Charter website. Please see our Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (Board Policy 0812-01). Please refer to the Westlake Charter School website at [www.westlakecharter.com/board\\_docs.policies.php](http://www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php).

### **Dress Code and Uniforms:**

School Uniforms:

The uniform policy of Westlake Charter School was adopted as a means of enhancing positive interaction between students and eliminating issues surrounding attire. Uniforms are to be worn Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, denim jeans and a spirit shirt or a college-logo printed shirt can be worn. *Jeans must be free of rips or tears.* Each student will be provided with a spirit shirt at the beginning of the year.

Uniform clothing must be kept clean and in good repair, free of rips and tears and not contain inappropriate language or images. This Dress Code and Uniform guideline applies during school hours and extra-curricular events whereby the student is representing WCS.

### **Tops**

- Navy blue, light blue, or white collared shirts, blouses or turtlenecks
  - If shirts are layered, any visible shirt must be navy, light blue, or white
  - Vests are permitted if they are navy blue or white
  - Shirts must fit so as to cover midriffs
  - *It is preferred that outerwear (sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets) are navy, light blue, or white*



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### **Bottoms**

- Navy blue or khaki pants, skirts or shorts
  - Must be worn at or above the hip
  - Skirts and shorts must be at least fingertip length

### **Shoes**

- Footwear must be worn at all times
  - Shoes or sneakers are recommended
  - Sandals may be worn if they have heel straps
  - Athletic shoes are required during PE

### **Accessories**

- Hats, hoods, caps, and beanies may be worn outside
- Jewelry, wristwatches, and other accessories should be worn in a manner that would not interfere in safe play or study or cause any interruption in class

### **Financial Assistance**

Requests of financial assistance for uniforms may be made to the Principal. Requests will be kept confidential insofar as possible.

### **Dress Code Violations**

The Principal or designee shall be responsible for implementing and enforcing a consistent process for responding to students who violate this Uniform Policy and Dress Code.

- Students who come to school in violation of this Uniform Policy and Dress code will be asked to change. The student's family may be contacted to bring a uniform, or the student will be provided a uniform from our clothes closet. All clothes are cleaned before being made available to students.
- Any special circumstances that may interfere with a child's ability to follow this policy and/or dress code must be discussed and approved with the Principal.

### **Field Lessons:**

Field Lessons are used to enhance the learning in the classroom. Grade levels will share a schedule of potential field lessons during Back to School Night. All adult chaperones must have fingerprinted clearance before chaperoning a field lesson. Adult chaperones will need to have a clear TB test prior to chaperoning overnight field lessons.

### **Birthdays:**

Families wishing to celebrate their Explorer may bring a small, lunchbox-sized, sealed birthday bag to the front office with a non-food treat for their student or the entire class. The front office will deliver the birthday bag to the classroom. Balloons, flowers, or other gifts cause a distraction in the classroom and cafeteria. These items should not be sent to school. Any such deliveries will be held in the office until dismissal time. Birthday treats (cake, cookies, cupcakes, pizza, etc.) are not allowed in the classroom or cafeteria.





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**Examples of food not allowed to be brought to school:** Energy drinks, coffee, gum, sunflower seeds, soda, etc.

**Buying/Selling Items on campus:** Students are not to engage in selling, trading, or bargaining for items at school, including food items. Violating this policy may result in disciplinary action.

**Personal Belongings at school:** Toys, trading cards, sports equipment, or any personal belongings at school cause distractions and in many cases have led to conflict between students. Items of this nature may 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, damaged, or stolen items.

## Get Involved

Respect – Excellence – Responsibility – **Gratitude** – Inquisitive – Joyful Learning – Global Perspective – **Stewardship** – Perseverance – Reflective

The Westlake Charter School community demonstrates the core value of Stewardship by volunteering with our W.A.V.E. parent group and in our classrooms. Westlake Charter School demonstrates the core value of Gratitude by helping others in our community to make our school a better place for our Explorers to learn.

### **W.A.V.E. (Westlake Association of Volunteer Explorers)**

All families are part of WAVE. WAVE works alongside the school administration and the WCS board in fulfilling the stated mission of our school. Since WAVE recommends that all families volunteer a minimum of thirty hours per year, WAVE offers a conduit through which parents can connect to the many volunteer needs of the school. Opportunities include leadership roles within the WAVE, as well as within various committees, such as Fundraising, Hospitality, Communications, and Parent Participation. Families can also easily earn hours by attending field trips, helping in the classroom, volunteering at WCS events, attending meetings, and more.



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### **Volunteering at Westlake Charter School:**

WCS values our family volunteers. The needs of each classroom teacher differ when it comes to classroom volunteers. Please follow these guidelines when planning to support your classroom or specialty teacher:

1. Connect with your classroom teacher at least 24 hours before coming to volunteer in the classroom. This will give the teacher a chance to be prepared and make your volunteer time as efficient as possible.
2. Check-in at the front office to receive a volunteer badge.
3. If volunteering in a classroom, support all Explorers in the classroom, or your group, as instructed by the classroom teacher.
4. If volunteering to prepare materials, please respect the teacher's workroom shared space.

All volunteers are asked to wait until after the first eight days of school are completed before coming on campus to volunteer. This allows our Explorers and their teachers to build community within their classroom spaces.

### **Expanded Learning Opportunities:**

Expanded learning at Westlake Charter School includes before school, after school, summer, or intersession learning programs that focus on developing the academic, social-emotional, and physical needs and interests of Explorers through hands-on, engaging learning experiences. Expanded learning offerings include our BASE program, After-School Live, Enrichment, Clubs, Athletics, Volunteerism, and more. Combined, these programs offer several hours of expanded learning opportunities during the academic year, and as well as opportunities over some breaks and during the summer months. Explorer students may access a variety of programs throughout the year; some programs have space limitations, so please express your interest in participating in an expanded learning program as soon as it becomes available through the Family Westlake Weekly.

### **Westlake Charter School's Governing Board:**

The Board traditionally meets every month. Meetings are open to the public except during closed sessions. All parents/guardians and members of the public are invited to attend board meetings and/or to address (in-person or in-writing) any concerns, questions, or feedback concerning the governance of the school. Agendas of all Board and Board-sponsored Committee meetings are posted at each school campus (2680 Mabry Drive, 95835; 4400 East Commerce Way, 95834) and on [www.westlakecharter.com](http://www.westlakecharter.com).

### **Our Relationship with the Natomas Unified School District:**

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



## Student Technology Use Guidelines

Respect – Excellence – Responsibility – Gratitude – Inquisitive – Joyful Learning – **Global Perspective** – Stewardship – Perseverance – Reflective

WCS demonstrates the core value of Global Perspective through our use of technology as a tool to develop 21st-century skills in our Explorers, which will allow them to lead as Global Citizens.

### Internet Acceptable Use Policy:

Families are asked to sign an acceptable use agreement each year. The acceptable use agreement will be sent home separately from the handbook at the start of the school year.

1. The acceptable use agreement states the following: I will not misuse the technology issued by the school.
  - a. My use of any technology issued by the school will be for educational purposes only.
  - b. I will not download inappropriate “Apps” on the technology issued by the school. This means Apps that are not academically related and/or approved by my Teacher, Principal, or the Executive Director of Westlake Charter School.
  - c. Although my email account can only communicate with staff email accounts, I will only send emails for school-related purposes.
  - d. I will browse websites that are appropriate or contain appropriate content. This includes websites that are not harmful to the technology issued by the school, offensive to other students, or that are not academically related.
  - e. I will not take or keep inappropriate videos/pictures on the technology issued by the school. This means videos or pictures that are not academically related and/or approved by my Teacher, Principal, or the Executive Director of Westlake Charter School.
2. I will surrender any technology issued by the school to any member of the Westlake Charter School Administration Team at any time for inspection.
3. The penalty for violating either items 1 or 2 will include school consequences as administration deems necessary, beginning with communication between the school and Parent/Guardian.



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### **Cell phones and electronic devices on campus:**

Westlake Charter School will permit students to possess but not use cell phones, smart watches and/or other electronic signaling devices except outside of the school day. Students who possess these devices are to keep them turned off and away in their backpack. All students are required to adhere to the following guidelines regarding cell phones and other electronic signaling devices:

#### **1st violation:**

Cell phones will be confiscated and secured in the office for the remainder of the day. Students will be reminded of expectations and family will be notified.

#### **2nd violation:**

Cell phones will be confiscated and secured in the office for the remainder of the day. Families will be contacted. Behavior referral will be submitted.

#### **3rd violation:**

Cell phones will be confiscated and secured in the office for the remainder of the day. Families will be contacted and a plan to prevent future violations will be crafted. Behavior team may issue a disciplinary response and enter a behavior referral.

#### **4th or more violations:**

Response will mirror the 3rd violation but may result in progressive disciplinary action

Cell phones will be off and away during non-class periods. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices may not be used during lunch times or other “free” periods during the school day.

Please refer to WCS Board Policy #BP08-04 on the Westlake Charter School website at [www.westlakecharter.com/board\\_docs.policies.php](http://www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php).



## Health & Safety

**Respect** – Excellence – Responsibility – Gratitude – Inquisitive – Joyful Learning – Global Perspective – Stewardship – Perseverance – Reflective

Westlake Charter School demonstrates the Core Value of Respect in our response to the health and safety needs of our Explorers. The health and safety of our Explorers is the priority in all areas of campus and our policies regarding health and safety mirror that belief.

### **Nut Caution Zone:**

At WCS, we ask families to pack lunches and snacks for their Explorers that are peanut-free. We also limit the food that is kept in the classroom during the school day. In classrooms where there are more severe allergies, extra precautions may be put in place.

### **Medication at School :**

All medication (prescription AND non-prescription) needed by Explorers during school hours must be accompanied by written approval from a medical professional on a Physician's Authorization for Medication at School form signed by their doctor and on file in the Health Office, where it will be securely stored. All medication must arrive and be stored in its original container.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

In the event of an emergency (fire, earthquake, storm, etc.), WCS staff will follow the safety guidelines outlined in the WCS Safety Plan. This plan can be produced upon request in our front office. Typically, during a safety emergency, all staff will remain at the school until all children have safely exited the site, 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 designee. 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/guardians or other designated adults.

### **Suicide Prevention:**

WCS recognizes that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, WCS has developed strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. Please refer to WCS Board Policy #BP0817-01 on the Westlake Charter School website at [www.westlakecharter.com/board\\_docs.policies.php](http://www.westlakecharter.com/board_docs.policies.php).



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### **Transportation Safety:**

Westlake Charter School may provide transportation to or from a Westlake school activity and has procedures for Westlake personnel, parents/guardians and volunteers to follow to ensure the safe transportation of students. Students shall be informed that any violation of Westlake policies and procedures, including violation of safety procedures on a school bus or school activity bus, could result in discipline pursuant to the Westlake discipline policy.

### **Field Lesson Transportation:**

Consideration will be given to the safest mode of transportation and the safest routes of travel. The legal occupancy limit of vehicles must not be exceeded. Seat belts are to be used at all times while traveling.

If transportation for the field lesson or excursion is provided by parents/guardians, such parents/guardians shall provide proof of liability insurance. A copy of the insurance policy shall be given to the Principal of the Charter School or their designee. The parents/guardians shall acknowledge in writing that their insurance carrier is the primary agent responsible for insurance for the field lesson or excursion. The Charter School shall take reasonable precautions to ensure that individuals volunteering to transport students are responsible and capable operators of the vehicles to be used.

With the exception of parental permission for siblings, students shall not transport other students.

### **School Employees and Parent/Guardian as Chaperones and Drivers:**

As field lessons and excursions are an integral part of the Westlake learning experience, parents are encouraged to participate in an assisting role with students. The Principal or their designee will provide parents and guardians with specific supervisory guidelines prior to any Westlake group trip involving students. Topics to be included are safety regulations, emergency responses, and responsibilities of the parent/guardian volunteers and language or behavior requirements of all attendees.

A participating parent or guardian will be assigned to a specific group of students to supervise and will be responsible for these students at all times during the field trip or excursion. Under no circumstances will a parent or guardian consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) during a field lesson or excursion. The parent or guardian will notify the Principal or their designee, in advance of the field lesson or excursion, should they be under a physician's orders and using medications.



Particularly for our high school students who participate on an athletics team, regular travel to and from meets, games, practices, tournaments and similar activities will occur that may necessitate carpooling for transport. All staff drivers will abide by the regulations outlined in this policy when transporting students during school-sponsored activities. At the beginning of each sports season, parents/guardians will be provided a notification letter/permission slip informing them of the possibility that other parent/guardian volunteers and coaches/school staff may serve as chaperones and drivers to transport students to meets and games throughout the season. Parents may decline permission for their child to be transported by a coach/staff member/other parent or guardian, in which case that student will be responsible for his/her own transportation.

All adults taking out-of-state field trips or excursions (including athletics meets and games), and all parents or guardians of pupils taking out-of-state field trips or excursions (including athletics meets and games) are required to sign a statement waiving all claims against Westlake, its employees, and the State of California for injury, accident, illness or death occurring during or by reason of the field trip or excursion (including athletics meets and games).

At all times during the field lesson or excursion (including athletics meets and games, etc.), employee and volunteer drivers will use the safest mode of transportation and the safest route of travel. If travel is not by bus, the legal occupancy limit of ten (10) occupants (including the driver) must not be exceeded, all speed notices must be strictly adhered to and students are to be seated with individual seat belts engaged at all times.

Westlake shall take reasonable precautions to ensure that all employees and volunteers who transport students are responsible and capable operators of the vehicles to be used and ensure compliance with Driver Requirements as follows:

- A. Employee or volunteer drivers who offer to provide transportation for a field trip or excursion (including athletics meets and games) must provide a copy of the following:
  1. Proof of liability insurance for their vehicle with a minimum of \$100K/\$300K coverage.
  2. A copy of their Driver's License and Vehicle Registration.
  3. A written statement acknowledging that their insurance carrier is the primary agent responsible for insurance during the field trip or excursion.
  4. A criminal background check conducted by the California Department of Justice ("DOJ"). Employees or volunteers whose DOJ report reveals a Driving Under the Influence conviction shall not be permitted to transport students or operate any vehicle on Westlake business for ten (10) years from the date of the conviction. Any employee or volunteer convicted of a felony shall not be permitted to transport Westlake students on Westlake business.
  5. A Department of Motor Vehicles record. Employees or volunteers with driving records with two (2) points or more shall not be permitted to transport students or operate any vehicle for Westlake field trips and excursions (including athletics meets and games).



Each of these items will be provided to the Executive Director or coordinating teacher prior to driving on a field trip or excursion (including athletics meets and games), or at the beginning of each sports season.

For the employee's/volunteer's safety and that of all the students in their car, the following rules apply:

1. All Westlake rules apply to students in the car. Employee/volunteer drivers should report student behavior to the Principal or their designee as necessary to maintain safety.
2. All California driving laws must be followed including child restraint laws: no texting or distracted driving, hands-free phone use only.
3. No movies may be shown in vehicles.
4. No side trips are allowed.
5. Maps and directions from the teacher/coach should be reviewed prior to leaving.
6. No purchases for students should be made on the field trip/excursion including food or treats for students in the car.
7. Call the Westlake office immediately if there is a problem.

#### **California Law Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms:**

The purpose of this section is to inform and remind parents and legal guardians of all students of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law. Incidents such as these can be mitigated by storing firearms in a safe and secure manner, including keeping them locked up when not in use and storing them separately from ammunition.

This section spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this information and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law.

- With very limited exceptions, California makes a person criminally liable for keeping any firearm, loaded or unloaded, within any premises that are under their custody and control where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby (1) causes death or injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm off the premises or to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, or to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; or (3) unlawfully brandishes the firearm to others.<sup>1</sup>
  - Note: The criminal penalty may be significantly greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.
- With very limited exceptions, California also makes it a crime for a person to negligently store or leave any firearm, loaded or unloaded, on their premises in a location where the person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to it without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, unless reasonable action is taken





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to secure the firearm against access by the child, even where a minor never actually accesses the firearm.<sup>2</sup>

- In addition to potential fines and terms of imprisonment, as of January 1, 2020, a gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces prohibitions from possessing, controlling, owning, receiving, or purchasing a firearm for 10 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Finally, a parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person's child or ward.<sup>4</sup>

Note: Your county or city may have additional restrictions regarding the safe storage of firearms.

Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

<sup>[1]</sup> See California Penal Code sections 25100 through 25125 and 25200 through 25220

<sup>[2]</sup> See California Penal Code section 25100(c)

<sup>[3]</sup> See California Civil Code Section 29805

<sup>[4]</sup> See California Civil Code Section 1714.3

### **California Law Regarding Notification of Synthetic Drugs:**

The State of California asks that we notify parents and guardians of each enrolled student about the dangers associated with using synthetic drugs that are not prescribed by a physician, such as fentanyl. Parents and guardians should also be aware of the possibility that dangerous synthetic drugs can be found in counterfeit pills. For more information on the dangers associated with synthetic drugs, please contact your health provider.