



west aurora
high school
blackhawks

STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2021-2022

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West Aurora High School
2021-2022
Student Handbook

Welcome to the 2021 - 2022 School Year

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about countless challenges which required us all to make difficult decisions and channel resilience, even when it seemed impossible. West Aurora School District 129 is thankful for our educators, families, and students who, by way of their creativity, adaptability, and dedication, rose to the challenge. We now have an opportunity to emerge stronger and make lasting changes in the ways we support, teach, connect with, and value the more than 12,000 students in our care.

As the 2021-22 school year gets underway, some of the procedures from last school year will look the same and others will look different and continue to change as the pandemic metrics designate. The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students and families with the most current procedures and expectations needed to keep our buildings operating in a safe and orderly manner. Any updates or changes to these procedures will be communicated in multiple media formats, including an update to this document. Access to the student handbook can be found on the district and individual school websites. If you would like a printed copy, please contact your child's school office and they can assist you.

For the most updated COVID-19 information, please visit our website at www.sd129.org/covid-19/sanitation-procedures

Our entire staff would like to welcome our new and returning students to a new and exciting school year in School District 129, where we embrace the curiosity, complexity, and joy of learning!

Student Support Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

National Crisis Counseling Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

SAFE2HELP Illinois

Seek Help Before Harm

1-844-4-SAFEIL

Text - 72332

Download the SAFE2HELP Illinois mobile app

Bookmark the page: www.safe2helpIL.com

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE REPORTING

Absence Reporting Procedures (full or partial day)

Consistent student attendance is important for the academic and social emotional growth of every student. We understand there are times when a student might miss school due to an appointment, family emergency, or student illness. If a student is unable to attend school on a given day, we ask that parents/guardians please contact the attendance line in their student's House to report an absence, late arrival, or early release request.

In an effort to maintain a healthy and safe school environment, we also ask that the reason for each absence be provided to the attendance line. Having specific information about illness symptoms will assist the district in making important decisions and communicate accordingly as we continue to navigate the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. We also encourage parents/guardians to provide the House offices with pertinent notes that document the reason for the absence from the appropriate agency or healthcare provider.

Students leaving or returning to school for an appointment should obtain an admit slip from their House.

Requesting a pre-arranged absence

When an absence is known ahead of time, a parent/guardian should contact the school three days prior to the absence. Official documentation of the absence (court documents, medical notes, etc.) should be supplied to the student's House prior to or upon return of the pre-arranged absence.

Early release request

A parent/guardian must contact the attendance line in their student's House to schedule an early release. No early release requests will be accommodated after 1:00pm for a same-day release, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE BOOKSTORE, LOST AND FOUND & TEXTBOOK REPAIRS

Workbooks, school supplies, spirit wear, PE uniforms, etc. are available for purchase by students at the bookstore. The store is open from 7:10-7:30 a.m., during lunch hours and after school, except during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lost and Found is also located at door 16A. There will be a charge for any damage to a textbook, removal of the textbook barcode label, or rebinding of any textbook due to student damage.

CAFETERIA

Students are required to remain in the cafeteria during their assigned lunch periods. Leaving the cafeteria without permission will result in disciplinary action. To maintain an orderly and healthy environment, students are responsible for keeping their tables, chairs and floor areas free of litter as well as cooperating with cafeteria supervisors. Free and reduced lunches are available to eligible students. Eligibility of the Free and

Reduced Lunch Program is accessible on the district's website, www.sd129.org. *Note: During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing guidelines should be maintained during lunch periods.*

CLASS RANK

When the grade point average (GPA) has been determined for each student, all averages are placed in order from highest to lowest. Each student is given a position number from one (1) to the total number of students at each grade level. When two students have the same GPA, the same rank is assigned to both and the next rank drops two places. Students may obtain their class rank by contacting the Student's House.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Students may not leave the school building without written permission during the school day. Leaving campus without permission and/or opening exit/entrance doors is a school safety violation and will result in disciplinary action.

CONTACTING A TEACHER

There is an online service available to parents/guardians and students to monitor academic progress and attendance as well as to contact teachers. The Schoology link can be accessed by logging onto the district's website at (app.schoology.com). For additional information, please contact your student's House.

COURSE DROP/LEVEL CHANGE PROCEDURE

As a school, we encourage all students to take course selection seriously. Each year when a student meets with his/her school counselor, that course request is to be considered final. A student's transcript should accurately reflect the school's curriculum and challenge a student academically to prepare him/her for their post-secondary plan. It is also the belief that students should balance their academic workload and participate in school and community activities. The goal of West Aurora High School is to prepare students to be well-rounded citizens who are prepared for a post-secondary education and career.

If a student feels that they have committed to a course that no longer reflects what is best for their academic plan of action, they may request a change by contacting their counselor within the first 10 days of the semester. The counselor will then consult with the student's past and present teachers and determine if the request will be granted. If granted, the student's transcript will not negatively reflect the change. A student may not drop a course for the purpose of late start or early release. Adding a course is based on availability.

If a circumstance arises between day 11 and 32 of the semester, a student may still appeal to the counselor for a course change. If the change is granted, a grade of NC (no credit) will be reflected on the transcript with no impact to the student's GPA/RIC.

After day 33, a grade of WF (withdraw with a grade of F) will be awarded and the F will average into the student's GPA/RIC

COURSEWORK

Coursework and homework are integral parts of learning at West Aurora High School. Students are responsible for the completion of work whether they are present at school, learning remotely, or absent. Absences and their respective make-up requirements are as follows:

1. General Absence: Students have the right to earn full credit for make-up assignments due to excused absences providing they:
 - a. Request homework on or before the day he/she returns to school.
 - b. Establish a timeline with the teacher for the completion of work.
 - c. Successfully complete the work within the determined timeline.
 - d. Obtain notes missed in class from a fellow classmate.

2. Out-of-School Suspensions
Students, who receive an out-of-school suspension, are responsible for requesting and making up the homework missed while on suspension. A parent/guardian may pick-up homework during the suspension. The teacher will supply the student with instructions to complete the missing day's work. The amount of time given to make up homework is equal to the number of days suspended out of school. If, after that time, the work is not made up, credit will not be given for the missed assignments. If students are aware of projects/due dates prior to suspension, students are expected to turn their work in on the due date. Students should not expect teachers to duplicate instruction or provide private tutoring for missed coursework.

3. Extended absences
Upon return from an absence of more than 10 consecutive days, the student and parent should contact the Student's House and request a conference to address make-up work.

4. Truancy
Credit will not be given to students who are considered to be habitual truants.

CRISIS RESPONSE

District 129 works with a broad-based team representing law enforcement, emergency services, community agencies, and others to continually improve responding to emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, communication will be broadcast to parents/guardians via automated phone, email, text messaging, and social media. Please follow the instructions communicated in those communications to help our school staff mitigate the emergency.

School safety drills will be scheduled at times established by the school's administration. A minimum of the following will occur each school year:

- 3 evacuation drills
- 2 severe weather drills
- 1 law enforcement drill
- 1 bus evacuation drill

It is the belief of the district's school safety team that regular opportunities to practice safety measures are in the best interest of students, staff, and the school community. This being said, all school safety drills will be announced to students before the exercise and at no time will any look-alike weapons or scary tactics be used.

CONCUSSIONS

Students who exhibit signs and symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury must be removed from participation or competition at that time. Such students will not be allowed to return to play unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine or a certified athletic trainer. Students who have experienced concussions will be supported by the District in accordance with the school's Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn protocols. Parents/guardians should notify the building principal and nurse if they are aware that their student has suffered a concussion. See Board Policy, 7.305 *Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries*.

DANCES

To attend West Aurora High School dances, students must meet behavioral criteria determined by the building administration. Students may obtain a guest pass if they wish to bring a guest to a school dance. Guests must be in at least 9th grade and under the age of 21. Before admittance to the dance, West Aurora High School students and guests must present valid school/picture IDs. Appropriate dress is expected at all times. Students who dress in a manner that is inappropriate at a school function will be requested to adjust such clothing to conform to expected levels of good taste and style. Students will not be permitted admittance to the dance one hour after the dance starts and parents are responsible to make sure their student is picked up at the conclusion of the dance.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Students are required to abide by the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code while in attendance at West Aurora High School. Any student that violates the Code will receive disciplinary actions associated with the infraction. See *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.

ELECTRONICS/CELLULAR COMMUNICATIVE DEVICES

It is understood by District 129 that students will carry cellular phones, smart phones, and other small electronics with them to school. These items must remain silenced during the academic day. Any disruption caused by these devices will result in confiscation and disciplinary actions. West Aurora High School and District 129 does

not accept responsibility for lost, stolen or broken electronic items brought to school. Students and parents/guardians should understand that having these items on campus is at the owner's risk.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event District 129 finds it necessary to close or implement an early or late dismissal at one or more of its school buildings due to inclement weather, a health emergency, or other unforeseen circumstance, parents/guardians will be notified via either automated phone, email, text messaging, and/or social media.

ENTERING AND EXITING THE BUILDING

Before the start of the school day, students should enter the building through Door 9, 16A, 20, and 22.

After 7:35 a.m., students must enter through Door 16A. From 7:35 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., Door 16A must be used by students and parents for school-related activities such as, dropping off items for students or picking students up from the building during the school day.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS

RATIONALE

West Aurora High School encourages all students to take advantage of school sponsored athletics and extracurricular activities. These programs are designed to enhance the well-balanced educational programming offered by District 129 and provide students with life lessons and skills necessary for success. Students, who choose to participate in an activity with a performance-based element, represent West Aurora High School, District 129, and the Aurora community. Participants make a commitment to their peers and coaches/sponsors to follow rules and conform their conduct, at all times, to the highest standards. Participants, whether in or out of uniform, are not only responsible for their reputations, but also that of their families, team, and school. Participation is a privilege, not a right.

THE CODE APPLIES TO

The Code of Conduct applies to all students attending West Aurora High School, who participate in an activity, outside of the school day, with a performance-based element. All extra-curricular activities are exempt from academic merit. Activities covered under the Code include, but are not limited to the following:

- All Athletic Teams
- Pom/Cheer Teams
- Theatrical Productions
- Madrigals
- Club Sports
- Speech Team
- CAD Drafting
- DECA
- FCCLA

WHEN THE CODE APPLIES

The Code of Conduct is activated the first time a high school student becomes a member of an athletic team or extra-curricular activity. The Code applies to all student participants, twelve (12) months of the year, seven (7) days of the week, twenty-four (24) hours a day. It remains in effect in and out of season, on and off school grounds, and until commencement or withdrawal from District 129.

CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Student participants must conduct themselves as good citizens and exemplars of West Aurora High School and District 129. Disciplinary violations that enact the Code of Conduct are as follows:

- Possession, use, and/or distribution of tobacco, hookah, or electronic-tobacco products
- Possession, use, and/or distribution of illegal drugs, look-alike drugs, or drug paraphernalia
- Possession/use/distribution of illegal performance enhancing drugs or supplements
- Possession, use, and/or distribution of alcoholic beverages
- Engaging in hazing or any type of bullying or aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to another or urging other students to engage in such conduct. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to any use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, harassment, or hazing (either in person or by electronic means).
- Criminal acts or serious acts, including but not limited to, theft, possession of stolen property, or destruction of property, which are determined to be detrimental to the individual, the coach, team, or school district by the Athletic Director, Activity Director, or Building Administration.
- Acts resulting in arrest or a pending police report

CONSEQUENCES/ CONSECUENCIAS

First Offense

A student, who violates the Code of Conduct for a first offense, will be issued a suspension totaling 50% of the entire competition season of an athletic or performance-based activity. The suspension must be served during the dates assigned by the athletic director or administration. Depending on the time left in the season, the suspension may transfer to the next season, activity, or school year.

First Offense Only Reduction Option

This option allows a student who violated the Code, for the first time, to reduce their suspension from 50% of the entire performance season, to 25%. A student wishing to utilize this reduction option will need to participate in a District 129-approved assessment, counseling, or community service option, appropriate to the offense. *Note: District 129 is not responsible for any cost incurred in an assessment or counseling option. This option is not available when there is a pending police report or when an arrest has been made.*

Second Offense

A student being issued a Code of Conduct violation for a second offense will be issued a suspension totaling 50% of the entire competition season of an athletic or performance-based activity. The suspension must be served during the dates assigned by the Athletic Director or Administration, and depending on the time left in the season the suspension may transfer to the next season, activity, or school year. Note: There is no reduction option available for the second or subsequent offenses.

Third Offense

A student being issued a Code of Conduct violation for a third offense will be permanently removed from all West Aurora High School athletics, extra-curricular activities, contests, practices, or performance events for the remainder of the student's high school career.

CONDITIONS OF THE REDUCTION OPTION

When a student chooses to participate in the first offense reduction option, he or she is required to follow the recommendations resulting from the evaluation or treating professional. Documentation of such a program or evaluation must be provided to the Athletic Director or Administration. Once treatment is completed, documentation verifying the completion should also be presented to the Athletic Director or Administration. Note: District 129 is not responsible for any cost incurred in an assessment or counseling option. This option is not available when there is a pending police report or an arrest has been made.

REVIEW PROCESS

A student or parent/guardian may request an appeal to the disciplinary actions as a result of the Code violation to the building Principal or designee within five (5) days of notification. The request to appeal must be given in writing to the athletic director or administration. During the appeal process, the imposed discipline will remain in effect. The principal or designee decision on the appeal is final.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

IHSA and School Board Policy states that students must pass five classes per week to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics and activities. Additionally, students must pass five classes per semester in order to be eligible for participation in the subsequent semester. No student that has graduated from a four-year high school or its equivalent is eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics or activities.

Any student that transfers to West Aurora High School should contact the athletic director to determine his/her eligibility for athletics or extra-curricular activities in accordance with the IHSA By-Laws or Board Policy.

Athletes must have a valid physical examination each year to be eligible to participate in a sport. Physicals are valid for 395 days. The physical must be valid for the entire sport season.

An athlete who receives treatment from a doctor because of an injury must bring a written doctor's release to the trainer before returning to practice or competition.

Athletes must pay annual user fees to participate in a sport. The fee for the first sport is \$85. The second sport is \$55. The third sport is \$25.00.

HEALTH SERVICES

A nurse is on duty daily from 7:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. All student medications must be delivered to the health office by a parent/guardian with the appropriate medical documentation. Students may not hand carry prescription or over-the-counter medications to school. All school accidents must be reported immediately to a school official. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must report to the nurse for assistance. Under no circumstances is a student to leave the building without permission from the school nurse. A student must have a pass from his/her classroom teacher in order to be admitted to the nurse's office.

HOMEWORK

Schoology is an online service available to parents/guardians and students to monitor academic progress and attendance as well as to contact teachers. Parents may access Schoology by logging onto the district's website at (app.schoology.com).

HONOR ROLL

A student who earns a GPA of 3.0-3.749 in a semester will be on the Honor Roll. A GPA of 3.75 or higher will be considered the High Honor Roll.

Honors diplomas are issued to seniors at the end of eight semesters. Final cumulative GPA of 3.75-3.99 will receive a Cum Laude diploma, a Magna Cum Laude diploma is issued for a cumulative GPA of 4.0-4.29, and a Summa Cum Laude diploma is issued to students with a cumulative GPA of 4.25 and above.

HALLWAYS

Students are expected to be in their scheduled classes at all times unless they have permission and a pass, located in this handbook, from a staff member. During the change of classes there are more than 3,700 students moving through the halls at West Aurora High School. Rules and conduct are established for instructional reasons as well as for safety, cleanliness and climate control.

HANDBOOKS

Student handbooks are provided to each student at the beginning of the school year. They are published as an educational tool that promotes organization and provides students with general information about West Aurora High School. Students are

required to carry their handbooks with them at all times. In the event that a student loses his/her handbook, a replacement may be purchased for \$5 from the bookstore.

ID CARDS

Students are required to carry their school IDs at all times during the school day. Any ID card that is defaced will be confiscated and must be replaced at the student's expense. ID cards are required to ride the bus, enter the building, move throughout the building during class periods, and to be admitted to any after-school or extra-curricular events. Failure to possess an ID during the school day or defacing an ID may result in disciplinary action. Replacement IDs must be obtained in the student's House where restitution will be charged to the student's account.

Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy

West Aurora School District 129 has established a program to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. Two honors are available: the Seal of Biliteracy and the Commendation toward Biliteracy.

The Seal of Biliteracy is awarded to those who demonstrate proficiency in English and whose second language proficiency level is equivalent to Intermediate-High or above, as determined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The Commendation toward Biliteracy is awarded to students whose English and/or second language proficiency level is rated at Intermediate-Low or Intermediate-Mid. Please see the language proficiency testing dates below, and note that there will be an associated cost.

A student meeting the requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy or Commendation toward Biliteracy will receive this designation on his/her transcript as well as the diploma.

To qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy, seniors must:

- Earn a minimum English Language Arts score of 540 on an official administration of the SAT
- Earn a minimum composite score of 21 on an official administration of the ACT
- Earn a minimum overall score of 4.8 on the ACCESS for ELLs exam
- Earn a minimum score of 1-5 on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) exam in English
- Have earned a 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement language exam taken prior to this school year
- Earn a minimum score of 1-5 on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) exam. The following languages can be assessed with the AAPPL exam: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

To qualify for the Commendation toward Biliteracy, seniors must:

- Earn a minimum English Language Arts score of 540 on an official administration of the SAT
- Earn a minimum composite score of 21 on an official administration of the ACT
- Earn a minimum literacy score of 3.5 on the ACCESS for ELLs exam
- Earn a minimum score of I-1 on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) exam in English
- Have earned a score of 3 on the Advanced Placement language exam taken prior to this school year
- Earn a minimum score of I-1, I-2, I-3 or I-4 on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) exam. The following languages can be assessed with the AAPPL exam: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The West Aurora High School Voris Library is accessible to students Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. and on Friday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students visiting the library before the academic day should obtain a pass to do so and enter through Door 2. Students may check into the library during the school day by presenting a pass from a staff member and their student ID. Students may utilize the library during their lunch hour, but must arrive before the tardy bell and must stay the entire period. No food or drink will be allowed in the library. *Note: access to the Library/Media Center will be limited during COVID-19. These times will be communicated with students as they are adjusted throughout the year.*

1. After school hours

Students may check in at the front desk with their Student ID. Before check-in, students should have gone to their lockers, used the restrooms and met with teachers. Cell phones are allowed after school as long as they do not cause a disturbance in the library. *Note: additional guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic may be put in place.*

2. Library/Media Center Website

Students can renew library books online, access several online databases and learn about library programs, policies and procedures through the library website at www.sd129.org/westhigh/whlmc/. Some online databases require a username and password, which can be obtained from library staff.

LOCKERS

Every West Aurora High School student is assigned a school locker with a combination lock. Lockers are considered school district property and school officials may search a student's locker when there is reasonable suspicion to believe the locker contains some substance or item that violates school rules or threatens the health, safety and welfare of students or staff. The student should provide locks for physical education courses and athletics. The following guideline should be followed:

1. Students should not share their locker combinations with other students.
2. Students may not share their lockers with anyone other than their assigned locker partner.
3. Students should maintain the cleanliness of their lockers on a regular basis.
4. Students should report a broken or missing lock to the operation office immediately. Lost school locks will require a replacement fee of \$5. Non-school locks on hallway lockers will be removed. West Aurora High School does not accept responsibility for damage to locks during the removal process.
5. Students will maintain responsibility for items or substances found in their lockers that violate school rules.
6. Students and parents/guardians will be responsible for damage to lockers.

Note: Lockers will be limited to 9th grade and 10-12 requests during COVID-19

MESSAGES AND DELIVERIES

Phone messages and deliveries are a disruption to the educational process. Please contact the Student's House within West Aurora High School to relay messages only when it is a situation of extreme hardship or an emergency. Students should have a prior knowledge of items being dropped off at school, as they will not be called out of class for deliveries. Necessary deliveries should be brought to Door 16A. Purchased food from outside commercial establishments is a prohibited delivery.

STUDENT PARKING REGULATIONS

Parking at West Aurora High School is a privilege. Parking at West Aurora High School is a privilege. The following guidelines are:

1. Seniors and juniors must hold a valid driver's license and show proof of valid insurance to be permitted to purchase a permit.
2. Students who accumulate excessive attendance violations may lose parking privileges.
3. Vehicles with or without a valid permit that are parked in unauthorized areas will be towed at the owner's expense.
4. Students with valid parking permits may park in designated student parking only. Faculty and visitor parking areas are prohibited for student parking.
5. Loitering in parking areas is prohibited.
6. School officials maintain the right to search vehicles in the parking areas.
7. District 129 is not responsible for loss or damage to vehicles while on school property.
8. Refunds for parking permits will not be issued by West Aurora High School.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Student and staff safety is a top priority in District 129. In order to maintain safe school environments, all visitors must check-in at the school's main entrance. When prompted, visitors will be asked to state their name and the reason for their visit. Once entrance to the building has been permitted, visitors should immediately check in at the school's office. All visitors will be asked to present a valid and legal photo identification card prior to being issued a visitor's badge. All identification cards will be scanned through District 129's visitor management system, which is linked to the National Sex Offender Registry. Once the scan is complete, approved visitors will be provided a visitor's badge to be displayed at all throughout the visit. The badge should then be turned in with the visitor checks out of the building at the end of their stay.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state guidance requires schools to reduce visitors to the school in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus. Classroom volunteer opportunities will be considerably less or prohibited this school year. All meetings should be scheduled in advance with the student's House.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

To assist in maintaining the safety and security of the students and staff on campus at West Aurora High School, District 129 has positioned numerous video cameras and monitoring devices in public areas of the school. These public areas include, but are not limited to, hallways, stairwells, cafeteria and school buses. Any misconduct seen on video surveillance will be assigned appropriate disciplinary action.