



**WEST DES MOINES**  
**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Innovative Spirit. Inspiring Success.

# HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

RESOURCES FOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND VALLEY  
SOUTHWOODS FRESHMAN HIGH SCHOOL FAMILIES

**2023-24**

## Handbook Language Statement

<b>English</b>	The handbook includes important information about your student's school. You can request oral translation or interpretation of this information. Contact Natalie French, WDMCS ESOL Director, at 515-633-5173 or <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> .
<b>Arabic</b>	يتضمن الكتيب معلومات مهمة حول مدرسة الطالب. يمكنك طلب ترجمة شفوية أو كتابية. اتصل ب نطالي فرينج المسؤولة عن برامج متحدثي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة ثانية، على 5156335173 او <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a>
<b>Dinka</b>	Athör ë thöñjë käj anɔŋjɔ thön/wël thiikiic në biäkke thukul ë menhdun-thukul. Yin lëu ba thiëc në wërë yic ë wël cike göt ci geriic ka/wälë wël ë thok ci luel cike wariic e thön kënë. Yuöpë/cɔl Natalie French, Bëny ë WDMCS ESOL, në 515-633-5173 ic ka/wälë frenchn@wdmcs.org
<b>French</b>	Le manuel comprend des informations importantes sur l'école de votre élève. Vous pouvez solliciter une traduction orale ou une interprétation de ces informations. Contactez Natalie French, Directrice de WDMCS ESOL, au 515-633-5173 ou <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> .
<b>Hakha Chin</b>	Hi handbook ahhin abiapi mi na fa sianginn kong a tial. Tamdeuh theih na duh holhlet na herh ahcun; Natalie French, WDMCS ESOL Director, at 515-633-5173 or <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> ah request tuah khoh a si.
<b>Somali</b>	Buug-gacmeedkan waxaa ku jira macluumaad muhiim ah oo ku saabsan dugsiiga ardaygaaga. Waxaad codsan kartaa turjumaan afka ah ama turjumaada macluumaadkan. Kala xiriir Natalie French, Agaasimaha WDMCS ESOL, lambarka 515-633-5173 ama <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a>
<b>Spanish</b>	El manual incluye información importante sobre la escuela de su estudiante. Puede solicitar traducción o interpretación oral de esta información. Comuníquese con Natalie French, Directora de WDMCS ESOL, al 515-633-5173 o <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> .
<b>Swahili</b>	Kitabu cha mwongozo kinajumuisha maelezo muhimu kuhusu shule ya mwanafunzi wako. Unaweza kuomba tafsiri ya usemi au ukalimani wa maelezo haya. Wasiliana na Natalie French, Mkurugenzi wa WDMCS ESOL, katika 515-633-5173 au <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> .
<b>Tigrinya</b>	እቲ ናይ መምርሒ መጽሓፍ ብዛዕባ ቤት ትምህርቲ ተምሃራይ/ሪትኩም ኣገደስቲ ሓበሬታ ዘማለእ እዩ። ናይዚ ሓበሬታ ናይ ቃል ትርጉም ወይ መስተርጓሚ ክትሓቱ ትኽእሉ ኢኹም። ን ናታሊ ፍረንች (Natalie French)፣ ዳይሬክተር WDMCS ESOL፣ ብ 515-633-5173 ወይ <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a> ርኽብዎ።
<b>Vietnamese</b>	Cẩm nang bao gồm những thông tin quan trọng về trường học của con em bạn. Bạn có thể yêu cầu dịch thuật qua miệng hoặc bằng văn bản thông tin này. Liên hệ với Natalie French, Giám đốc ESOL WDMCS, theo số 515-633-5173 hoặc <a href="mailto:frenchn@wdmcs.org">frenchn@wdmcs.org</a>



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## **Special Section — West Des Moines Community Schools Districtwide Handbook**

## **West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) Overview**

### **Mission**

Working in partnership with each family and the community, it is the mission of the district to educate responsible lifelong learners so that each student possesses the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and values necessary to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world.

### **Vision**

WDMCS will be a caring community of learners that knows and lifts every child. We will inspire joy in learning. Our schools will excel at preparing each student for their life journey.

### **Portrait of a Graduate**

A West Des Moines Community Schools graduate will possess the essential skills and integrity to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems as a confident citizen, embracing our diverse and changing world.

### **Boundaries**

Covering 36.6 square miles, our district boundaries are rather irregular but generally lie:

- north of Warren and Madison County lines,
- south of Urbandale Avenue,
- east of the Dallas County line, and
- west of 63rd Street.

The following is a list of schools in our district that provide — or feed — our secondary schools with students as they progress in their education. These are called “feeder schools.”

- Indian Hills Junior High: Clive, Crestview, Crossroads Park, and Westridge
- Stilwell Junior High: Fairmeadows, Hillside, Jordan Creek, and Western Hills
- Valley Southwoods Freshman High School: serves grade 9
- Valley High School: serves grades 10-12
- Walnut Creek Campus: alternative high school, serves grades 9-12

For information about elementary school boundaries or a map of the district, please [visit the district website related to boundary information](#).

## About Our High Schools

### Valley High School

3650 Woodland Ave.  
West Des Moines, IA 50266  
515-633-4000

#### Principal

David Maxwell  
[maxwelld@wdmcs.org](mailto:maxwelld@wdmcs.org)

#### Associate Principals

Shannon Campbell  
[campbells@wdmcs.org](mailto:campbells@wdmcs.org)

Josh Griffith  
[griffithj@wdmcs.org](mailto:griffithj@wdmcs.org)

Chris Novak  
[novakc@wdmcs.org](mailto:novakc@wdmcs.org)

Megan Thomsen  
[thomsenm@wdmcs.org](mailto:thomsenm@wdmcs.org)

#### Activities and Athletics Director

Brad Rose  
[roseb@wdmcs.org](mailto:roseb@wdmcs.org)

### Valley Southwoods Freshman High School

625 South 35th St.  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-4500

#### Principal

Mindy Euken  
[eukenm@wdmcs.org](mailto:eukenm@wdmcs.org)

#### Associate Principal

Haley Hockensmith  
[hockensmithh@wdmcs.org](mailto:hockensmithh@wdmcs.org)

\*Principal Maxwell and Brad Rose  
are supervised by:  
Dr. Matt Adams  
Superintendent  
[adamsm@wdmcs.org](mailto:adamsm@wdmcs.org)  
515-633-5025

Principal Maxwell supervises the other  
associate principals.

### Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

The West Des Moines Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, familial status, and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, [3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265](https://www.wdmcs.org/3550-Mills-Civic-Parkway-West-Des-Moines-IA-50265); Phone: 515-633-5040; Email [jokd@wdmcs.org](mailto:jokd@wdmcs.org). (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)

## **Principals' Welcome**

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

We are honored to have the opportunity to serve you and your family. Our staff are excited to collaborate with you as students work toward graduation, participate in activities, grow, and build strong lasting relationships with their peers and adults.

Our secondary schools are dedicated to fostering a culturally responsive and affirming learning environment where students thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and are prepared for postsecondary success. This handbook is a guide to learn more about our schools. We encourage parents/guardians and students to acquaint themselves with the contents of the handbook prior to the start of the school year.

Our team is excited to welcome each of you to our buildings. We appreciate your trust in us and look forward to collaboratively supporting you and your family. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

Sincerely,  
The West Des Moines Community Schools Secondary Administrators



## General School Information

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A hard copy of the handbook is available upon request. In addition, any information linked to content on the WDMCS website can be made available in hard copy upon request.

### Schedules

#### Academic Calendar

The official [school district activity calendar](#) is your complete reference for district activities and events. The [Calendar at a Glance](#) is also available to view or print online in seven languages: Arabic, Bosnian, English, Hakha Chin, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese. Please visit the [Valley Southwoods](#) or [Valley High School](#) website for current daily schedules.

#### Athletic Calendar: <https://valleytigersathletics.com/events>

- View athletic schedules
- View directions to athletic events

#### School Hours

- **Regular Schedule** — Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.
- **Collaboration Schedule** — Wednesday 8:20 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.

#### Office Hours

Student Services      7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Media Center          7:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Health Office Hours   7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

School will close at 4 p.m. Unless students are under the direct supervision of a teacher, students are to be out of the building.

### Attendance

Our role in preparing our students for postsecondary learning, careers, and life is best fulfilled when we are all HERE. We want your student to feel connected and that they belong HERE in WDMCS.

#### What is chronic absenteeism?

A student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10 percent of school, which is 18 or more days in a year. This equals only two days a month.

#### Why do we need to talk about it?

Research shows consistent attendance:

- helps children reach early academic and developmental milestones,
- helps students develop positive relationships with peers and staff,
- prevents students from falling behind academically,
- connects families to additional community resources, and
- increases graduation rates.

If your child needs to stay home or be late for school, please call the school office before the start of the school day and report your child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for the absence or tardiness. If a child is reported absent by the homeroom teacher and the school has not been notified, the secretary or school nurse will contact the home to ensure the child's safety.

### **Excessive Absences**

We wish to be proactive in reaching out to families regarding excessive absences. In addition to connecting with a family through email, phone, or text, the school will send an automatic letter at 5, 10, and 15 days absent, etc. These letters are generated even when the parent/guardian has excused the student from school. When a student is excessively absent, school administration will work with the parent/guardian and student to address any concerns and create a positive solution.

[Board Policy 501.06 \(Compulsory Attendance\)](#) spells out requirements for student attendance. Attendance is required for a minimum of 148 days, to be met by attendance for at least 37 days each school quarter. Exceptions to compulsory attendance are listed in the policy.

### **Dismissal for Tournaments**

Excused absences will be allowed if Valley or Valley Southwoods is participating during the regular school day for state tournaments. Parents/guardians must notify the school if their student wishes to be excused to attend a tournament.

### **How to Handle Assignments Due to Absences**

- **Missed Assignments:** Student should contact the instructor about assignments missed. They will have two days to make up the work for each day of an excused absence, for up to six school days for multiple, consecutive, excused absences. The time allowed for make-up work may be extended at the discretion of the teacher. Students should see teachers in advance of planned absences.
- **Incomplete Assignments:** All work from an incomplete semester or quarter must be made up within two weeks from the last day of the grading period. Failure to make up the work within this time will result in a failing grade. Extenuating circumstances may be worked out with teachers and administration.

### **Tardiness**

All students arriving 15 minutes after their scheduled class period begins will be considered absent. Students arriving at this time must go to the front office for a pass to class. Excessive tardiness may result in school administration working with the parent/guardian and student to address any concerns and co-create a positive solution.

### **Nutrition Services**

The West Des Moines Nutrition Department participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. Our meals and snacks must meet their standards.

### **Nine Schools Automatically Receive Free Meals for 2023-24**

All students who attend the nine schools listed below will receive free meals for the 2023-24 school year. This is made possible through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture program created to help low-income areas.

- Clive Learning Academy
- Crestview School of Inquiry
- Crossroads Park Elementary
- Hillside Elementary
- Western Hills Elementary
- Indian Hills Junior High
- Stilwell Junior High
- **Valley Southwoods Freshman High School**
- Walnut Creek Campus

### **Free/Reduced Meal Information for Non-Qualifying Schools**

Even though the four schools listed below do not qualify to receive free meals through the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), your family may still qualify for free or reduced meals. You can apply online at <https://family.titank12.com>.

- Fairmeadows Elementary
- Jordan Creek Elementary
- Westridge Elementary
- **Valley High School**

To make a payment or view account balance, visit [jawestdesmoines.intouchrecepting.com](http://jawestdesmoines.intouchrecepting.com).

### **Breakfast**

**Grades 7-12 Cost:** \$2.35 (\$0 reduced rate)

**Adults:** \$3 (no reduced rate)

- Students can select from a minimum of three entrée choices:
  - alternating main entrée choice;
  - cold breakfast consisting of cereal and toast;
  - yogurt and toast option.
- Assorted flavors of 8 oz. milk.
- Fruit and or vegetable choices including 100% juice.
- Breads/grains in the form of cereal, toast, pancakes, etc., and/or meat or meat alternate.

### **Lunch**

**Grades 7-12 Cost:** \$3.35 (\$.40 reduced rate)

**Adults:** \$4.85 (no reduced rate)

- Students can select from a hot lunch option, cold lunch option, or a yogurt/granola and string cheese entree kit.
- Choices also include a hot vegetable, cold fruits and vegetables, and their choice of milk (skim, skim chocolate, or 1%).

- Students will pick the meal they would like as they go through the line (no preordering).
- Students bringing lunch from home can supplement their meal with fruits, veggies, and milk (at least three items) from the cafeteria line.

#### **Lunch offerings consist of five components:**

- assorted flavors of milk;
- meat/meat alternate including choices such a yogurt or cheese;
- breads/grains that may include pizza crust, breading on a chicken product, brown rice, or a more traditional bread;
- fruit;
- vegetables.

#### **A La Carte Items**

School cafeterias also offer a la carte items for purchase at breakfast and lunch. These a la carte items are not part of a lunch and may only be purchased if there are funds in the student's account for them. The items will not count toward making "complete lunch."

If you would like to restrict your child from being able to purchase these items, please create a restriction on your student's account in the family portal at <https://family.titank12.com> or call the Nutrition Department at 515-633-5085 to get assistance with adding a restriction.

#### **Allergies**

WDMCS promotes a safe and inclusive allergy aware environment for all students. Students with allergies may be entitled to services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Accommodations and/or modifications will be considered and addressed on a case by case basis.

If your student needs diet modifications, a physician needs to complete the form: <https://discover.wdmcs.org/diet-modification>.

When completed, return the form to the Nutrition Services Department. Please check with your school nurse for specific information on restrictions and procedures related to allergies.

#### **Tiger Perk Coffee Shop (Valley High School only)**

The Tiger Perk Coffee Shop located in Valley High School offers a variety of drinks, popcorn, and "grab n' go" snack items. The coffee shop is open Monday-Friday 15 minutes before the first period until the end of the last scheduled lunch period.

#### **Food Deliveries**

Families can drop off lunch or school materials when needed at the school office. Please do not deliver food for anyone other than your student, and students are not allowed to order food delivery (UberEats, GrubHub, etc.)

## Miscellaneous Information

### Fees

Each student pays a book fee. Students may elect to purchase an activity ticket for regular season athletic events within the Central Iowa Metropolitan League, a yearbook, and upgraded project materials within certain courses. A combination lock is provided for the physical education locker. If the lock is lost, the student will be responsible for a replacement cost. [View Current Fee List](#)

Families can contact the building principal if financial assistance is needed. Please also reference waiver of fees information below.

### Waiver of Student Fees

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, the Family Investment Program (FIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), transportation assistance under open enrollment, or who are in foster care are eligible to have their student fees waived or partially waived. Parent/guardians or students who believe they may qualify for a waiver should complete the fee waiver form. You may also contact your principal for a form. This waiver does not carry over from year to year and must be completed annually. [Learn more about fee waivers](#).

### Fee for Transcript

All transcript requests must be made online using our automated student record/information request system. Please use the following link to access our online request system: <https://wdmcsia.scribborder.com>.

Students who may need assistance regarding the fee can contact their school counselor.

### Lost and Found

All found items should be brought to the Student Services office. If the office can determine the identity of the owner, the student will be notified. If the owner cannot be identified, the office will hold the item for 30 days. A student seeking a lost textbook should obtain the book's number from the teacher and report the number to the office or the instructor.

### Pets/Service Animals

Student safety and the cleanliness of the building are put at risk when animals accompany their owners for a drop-in visit at school. Other than a few exceptions, pets are not allowed in WDMCS buildings. In keeping with state and federal law, WDMCS recognizes there may be a need for employees or students to use or have access to qualified service animals. Students who need service animals, which are defined by law as “animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities,” are welcome to consult with their building administrator.

### School Supplies

High school students will receive information from their classroom instructors regarding what supplies will be needed. Families can contact the building principal if financial assistance is needed.

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## Communication and Family Involvement

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### 1:1 Chromebooks

The Chromebook 1:1 program in WDMCS issues each student in grades PK-12 a Chromebook for use with their academic studies. Chromebooks have become incredibly popular in schools across the country, largely because of their low cost and ability to meet the needs of students at all grade levels. Tight integration with Google tools such as Docs, Sheets, and Slides as well as the Canvas Learning Management System make Chromebooks the perfect fit for our school district.

District-provided technology resources exist solely for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policy, as well as state and federal laws and regulations.

Chromebooks are the property of WDMCS. Students should have no expectation of privacy related to content created, websites searched, or documents saved.

- [Board Policy 605.08 Technology Use By Students](#)

### Student Responsibilities

Students who check out a Chromebook provided by WDMCS should be careful to not lose or damage the device.

### Helpful Tips

- Keep Chromebook in its protective case.
- Charge Chromebook each night so it is ready for use at school.
- Avoid keeping the Chromebook in extreme temperatures because it could damage it.
- Be careful when eating or drinking near the Chromebook. Spilling items on it could cause damage.
- Let your teacher know if your Chromebook is not properly working or appears damaged.
- Let your teacher know if you misplaced your Chromebook.
- Do not share passwords or account information with other students.
- Turn in your Chromebook, including your charge cord and protective case, when asked or when you leave WDMCS.

### Parent/Family Responsibilities

Parents/guardians and families play a critical role in the success in their child's education. Please help support your student by encouraging them to be careful with the device. Fines possibly up to the full replacement cost may be applied if the device is damaged or lost. Please do not use the Chromebook for personal family use.

### Helpful Tips

- Please supervise the student's use of the Chromebook at home.
- Encourage your student to charge the Chromebook each night and keep it in the protective case when transporting it to and from school.
- Please contact the school if the Chromebook is damaged or not properly working. Do not

attempt to repair the Chromebook on your own.

- Please discuss the importance of protecting your online identity by not sharing passwords or other personal information with friends and strangers.
- Please ensure the Chromebook, including the charging cord and protective case, is returned when requested or when your student leaves WDMCS.

### **Costs**

There is no fee being assessed up front for your student's use of the Chromebook. Replacement costs are listed below:

- Chromebook Full Replacement: actual cost of replacement at the time of the damage (about \$346; no reduced fee)
- Chromebook Case Replacement: actual cost of replacement at the time of damage or if lost (about \$22, no reduced fee)
- Chromebook Charger Replacement: actual cost of replacement at the time of the damage or if lost (about \$22, no reduced fee)

### **Assessments**

[Board Policy 505.04](#): The WDMCS Board of Education believes that assessment is a planned and integral part of instruction which guides and documents student growth. Assessment is an ongoing process involving students, teachers, and parents/guardians in observation, interaction, and analysis. It consists of both formal and informal measures of individual and group progress.

### **Valley Southwoods**

#### ***Spring***

- AP Testing — optional
- Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)\*

### **Valley High School**

#### ***Fall***

- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) — optional
- PSAT — optional

#### ***Spring***

- ACT — optional
- AP Testing — optional
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) — optional
- English Language Learners: ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)\*
- Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)\*
- Conditions for Learning Survey

### **\*state-required assessments**

## **Surveys**

WDMCS distributes various student surveys throughout the year. Parents/guardians will be informed of any state-mandated surveys. Parents/guardians may be informed in advance of student surveys and asked to provide written or electronic permission based on guidelines outlined in the [State of Iowa Senate File 496](#).

## **Canvas Learning Management System — Viewing Academic Work and Grades**

Canvas is West Des Moines Community Schools' official learning management system. A learning management system is a software that helps provide, track, and report on classes and assignments. Canvas provides parents/guardians and students with greater access to their curriculum and learning by housing important student curricular expectations and information. This could include their online textbook, links to resources, homework, videos, assessments, online discussions, and so much more. [Learn more about Canvas](#).

## **Change of Address/Telephone Number**

If there is a change of address or telephone number during the school year, parents/guardians or students can make updates through Infinite Campus. This is a helpful online tool WDMCS families can use to access their students' grades, attendance, update contact information, and more.

## **Complaints Regarding School Personnel**

[Board Policy 906.01](#) provides a process for students, parents/guardians, and community members to file complaints regarding any district staff member.

## **How to Sign Up for Group Email to Parents/Guardians**

If you wish to receive email communication, please make sure that we have a current email address in Infinite Campus. You may provide this information during registration or at any time during the school year.

## **Infinite Campus — [Infinite Campus Login](#)**

The West Des Moines Community Schools uses a student information management system called Infinite Campus. This program increases access to student information for our teachers and administrators. Infinite Campus also allows students and parents/guardians to view some of this information through a secure internet connection.

Parents/guardians can view information about all of their students, including schedules, grades, attendance, health, etc. If you had an Infinite Campus account from a different school district, you will need to create a new one. The information does not transfer from other districts.

## **Updating Information in Infinite Campus**

- Update email address under “Change Contact Info” tab.
- Addresses and phone number updates can be made by contacting the school office.



## **Parent/Guardian-Teacher Organization**

All parent/guardian-teacher organizations are independent groups who help support the district. WDMCS has no oversight or control over their funds. They collaborate with school administrators to understand and support building goals.

All Valley and Valley Southwoods' parents/guardians are invited to join the Valley/Valley Southwoods parent/guardian-teacher organization (PTO). This organization was founded with the following goals:

- To develop a partnership among parents/guardians, school and community.
- To encourage communication and involvement among the parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and students.
- To provide resources and support for teacher and student activities.
- To facilitate and support other parent/guardian organizations at Valley and Valley Southwoods.

This PTO is not a fundraising body. Our only source of funds is the dues we collect. If you would like to join PTO and help support our activities, you can join by completing a form and paying \$20. You may turn both into the Student Services Office. Dues are used to help fund staff appreciation, staff conference dinners, the WDMCS Foundation Scholarship Fund, the staff recognition event, teacher cookie boxes, as well as other programs that support our students and teachers.

There are many ways parents/guardians can get involved and connected to the district in addition to joining their school's parent/guardian-teacher organization. Reach out to your school's principal to learn about other opportunities.

Parent/guardian-teacher organizations are encouraged to have a representative join School Community Network (SCN). This group meets several times a year to collaborate with each other. District representatives join some meetings to provide important district information that can be shared with parent/guardian-teacher organization members.

Parents/guardians enter the building through the front door and check in at the office to pick up a visitor badge every time they visit. Please bring your personal identification with you. Examples of personal identification include a state-issued ID, passport, military license, Mexico Consular ID card, and Permanent Resident card. Your ID will be run through a screening process called Raptor. They will also be asked where they will be in the building. This helps school staff understand where individuals are in the event of an emergency. Individuals who do not pass the Raptor screening process will not be allowed into the building.

If you have any questions or would like to become more actively involved, visit the [WDMCS website](https://wdmcs.org) for more information.

## Social Media

WDMCS is actively involved in social media. The district, WDMCS Community Education, and each school building have Facebook pages. In addition, WDMCS has Twitter and Instagram. See below for each web address.

- **Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/wdmcs> (links to each of the building pages on the “Welcome” tab)
- **Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/wdmcs\\_district/](https://www.instagram.com/wdmcs_district/)
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/WDMCS>

Valley Southwoods: <https://www.facebook.com/wdmsouthwoods>

Valley High School:

- <https://www.facebook.com/valley.wdmcs>
- <https://twitter.com/VHSTL>
- <https://twitter.com/vhstigers>

## Staff Directory

The district continues to provide ways to assist with communication between school, families, and the community through the internet. Our district website provides a “one-stop shop” staff directory page. This page contains a [searchable listing of contact information for our staff, including buildings and email addresses](#).

## Translation and Interpretation Services

An interpreter, translator, or sign language interpreter can be made available at most district events. In addition, WDMCS will work with families who have vision, auditory, or language needs to effectively communicate important district and student information. Please contact your school at least 48 hours in advance of the event to request these services.

No qualified individual will be excluded from participating in a public meeting in the West Des Moines Community Schools on the basis of a disability. To receive more information or request an accommodation to participate, please contact the School/Community Relations Department at 515-633-5023.

## Visitors and Volunteers

WDMCS welcomes visitors and volunteers to its school buildings. Visitors are individuals who come to watch an assembly, eat lunch with their student, or visit their student’s classroom. Typically, visitors arrange 24 hours in advance when they wish to meet with a classroom teacher and limit their visits to a short period of time. It is important that they do not interfere with the class in progress or discuss individual concerns when students are present. Young children and/or students must be accompanied by an adult when visiting.

Volunteers are often asked to help with a project at school. There are many choices for volunteers, including classroom assistance, participation in building and activity support groups, and service on districtwide or building committees. You may obtain more information about sharing your time and skills by calling your school office. Volunteers may be subject to additional screening processes.

Both visitors and volunteers enter the building through the front door and check in at the office to pick up a visitor badge every time they visit. Please bring your personal identification with you. Examples of personal identification include a state-issued ID, passport, military license, Mexico Consular ID card, and Permanent Resident card. Your ID will be run through a screening process called Raptor. They will also be asked where they will be in the building. This helps school staff understand where individuals are in the event of an emergency. Individuals who do not pass the Raptor screening process will not be allowed into the building.

Because WDMCS adheres to state and federal laws, all visitors and volunteers on school grounds must comply with the [State of Iowa's Senate File 482](#), which states individuals must use the restroom of their assigned gender at birth. All schools have multi-stall, gender-specific, and individual restrooms available.

### **Websites**

Valley Southwoods: [wdmcs.org/valley-southwoods](http://wdmcs.org/valley-southwoods)

Valley High School: [wdmcs.org/valley](http://wdmcs.org/valley)

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## **Academics**

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### **Academic Honesty\***

When teachers assign papers and projects to assess student learning, they assume that the work they evaluate was produced by the student whose name appears on that assignment. Instances of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously by the faculty and administration because it is our responsibility to maintain the fairness of the system as far as possible. These guidelines are intended to clarify what student behaviors are considered academically dishonest:

- Obtaining and/or accepting a copy of a test or scoring device. This includes copying another student's answers during an examination.
- Providing another student answers to or copies of examination questions.
- Having another student impersonate the student and/or impersonating a student to assist the student academically.
- Representing the product of someone else's creativity as one's own work.
- Using notes or other unauthorized materials during a "closed book" examination.
- Duplicating another student's project for submission as one's own work.
- Having someone other than the student prepare an assignment or assessment for which credit is given or permitting another student to copy an assignment or assessment other than for a teacher-approved collaborative effort.
- Any other action intended to obtain credit for work not one's own.
- Altering grades.

*\*Information adapted from Glenbrook High School (Illinois).*

### **Advisory Program**

The advisory program provides students with an adult who will help personalize their educational experience. During the advisory time, students will receive materials and instruction on schoolwide

initiatives such as social emotional learning, behavior expectations, bullying prevention, climate and culture, surveys, student elections, and college planning.

### **Changing Schedules**

Requests must be made on the online schedule change request form *only*. Phone calls and emails will not be accepted. Students may submit the schedule change request form only ONCE.

The following are the only acceptable reasons for a change:

1. An approved level change (i.e. moving from Chemistry B to Chemistry A)
2. Computer and/or clerical error (i.e. having two classes scheduled during the same period)
3. Failure to meet a course prerequisite (i.e. advancing in a world language when the student has performed poorly the previous semester)
4. Adding a course to meet graduation requirements
5. Adding a course to replace an open period
6. Adding a college entrance requirement
7. Dropping a course

Requests to move class periods around, teacher requests, and class substitutions will not be considered.

Students are able to drop courses only after speaking with their parent/guardian and counselor, and completing an online drop/add form which is located on the counseling website. Students may only submit ONE schedule change request each semester. The scheduling team will determine if the request meets the previously listed reasons to change a schedule. **Placement in a course requires space availability and must not exceed the class cap as determined for each course.**

Adding a course to a student schedule must be completed in the first three days of each semester.

### **Class Rank**

Class rank is not reported on the student transcript. Rather benchmarks of 3 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, and 20 percent will be provided for scholarship purposes. In a highly competitive school, it is possible to have a high GPA and not be ranked in the top of the class. This causes postsecondary institutions to examine the student's coursework and test scores, individualizing the admissions process.

### **Dropping a Course**

All students must be enrolled in six credited courses each semester in order to remain on track for graduation. Seniors in good standing may take a reduction in required credits with administrative approval. Seniors must be enrolled in no fewer than four credits.

Students typically have only the first 10 days of a semester to drop a course without academic consequences. If a student drops a class on or before the last day of first-quarter or third-quarter, a "W" for withdrawal will appear on the student's permanent transcript. Please view specific

guidelines [online](#). School counselors work with students during registration to find the best course schedule to meet student needs.

If withdrawing from a DMACC concurrent enrollment course, students must withdraw from the Valley or Valley Southwoods course as well, and will incur the same consequences as dropping from a non-concurrent enrollment course.

Students who have incomplete work due to extended, excused absences will have at least two weeks from the last day of the grading period to complete all missing work. Failure to make up the work within this time will result in a failing grade. Extenuating circumstances may be worked out with teachers and administration.

### **Effective Grading Practices**

We are committed to and are making strides toward improving our grading practices to ensure all students' grades are a true picture of what they know and are able to do in each course. The purpose of grading is to communicate achievement relative to course standards to students and parents/guardians.

[Read more about Effective Grading Practices.](#)

### **Make-Up Final Exams**

All final exams will be administered as scheduled. Should unusual circumstances arise, a formal request for an alternative assessment date shall be made in writing to building administration pending written approval at an agreed upon time.

### **Grade Classification**

All students entering Valley High School will automatically be classified as sophomores until they have earned the following number of credits for reclassification:

- Junior Status (11th grade) — Four or more semesters of high school attendance and a minimum of 24 credits (includes physical education).
- Senior Status (12th grade) — Six or more semesters of high school attendance and a minimum of 36 credits (includes physical education).

### **Graduation Requirements**

Valley students shall complete the required 48 high school credits in order to be eligible to participate in graduation activities and be granted diplomas. A student desiring to be excused from graduation activities shall submit the reasons in writing to the principal. See board policies below for more information.

- [Board Policy 505.05](#) (Student Graduation Requirements)
- [Board Policy 505.06](#) (Graduation Requirements for Valley High School and Walnut Creek Campus)

### **NCAA Eligibility Center**

If a student wishes to participate in Division I or Division II athletics in college, they must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Registration can be done at

<https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3>. Students will need to send a transcript at the time of registration and another following graduation. The NCAA reserves all rights in determining student eligibility. A copy of the guidelines is available in the Counseling Office.

### **Pass/No Pass (P/NP)**

Students will have the opportunity to choose one Pass/No Pass course per semester, provided it is not a required course or offered for DMACC credit. No course that can meet a graduation requirement can be taken Pass/No Pass until that graduation requirement is completed. Credit may be earned on a Pass/No Pass basis. Students will be expected to obtain a parent/guardian's signature for approval plus the signatures of their counselor and instructor to indicate their awareness of the student's intentions. View full details [online](#).

## **Resource Opportunities**

The high schools provide opportunities for support and collaboration with students beyond a regular school day. The following academic resources are available to students:

### **Valley Southwoods**

1. Students can request to meet with a teacher before school from 7:45-8:20 a.m.

### **Valley High School**

1. Saturday Morning Academic Resource Time (SMART), 8 a.m. to noon, Saturday mornings.

### **Silver Cord Award**

The purpose of the Silver Cord program is to encourage volunteerism and allow students to experience the joy of giving back to the community. Volunteering can provide a constructive use of time, foster the exploration of career interests, support youth seeking employment and college admission, and give new graduates the confidence to serve in leadership roles after high school. All high school students are encouraged to participate regardless of their GPA, rigor of course study, and artistic or athletic ability.

Students can review guidelines and complete the online application to acquire their Silver Cord account. This can be found on the [WDMCS Community Education website](#).

## **Student Conduct**

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### **Cell Phones and Communication**

- If there is a family emergency, please contact the school office, and they will reach your student. If there is an emergency at school, we will call the parent/guardian.
- Students may be asked to place their device in a caddy for the duration of the class.
- Cell phone/handheld electronic device usage is only allowed before or after school unless permitted by the teacher. This includes the use of earbuds.
- Smart watches can be worn as long as they are not a distraction.

- If a phone or other device becomes a distraction, a teacher or staff member may keep the device until the end of the day.
- WDMCS is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones or communication devices.
- To learn more about cell phone privacy, please read [Board Policy 502.09 - Search and Seizure](#)

### **Cheating and Plagiarism**

Students are expected to produce work to the best of their ability. Work submitted for credit or recognition is to be done by each individual student and must be their own work. Cheating and plagiarism will not be accepted. Students violating academic honesty will lead to parent/guardian communication, disciplinary consequences, and re-teaching of expected behaviors and use of resources. Students will be required to redo assessment evidence under supervision to gain an accurate evaluation of learning related to content standards.

### **Closed Campus (Valley High School)**

Valley High School has a modified closed campus policy. Students in grades 10 and 11 must be in attendance for the entire school day. Seniors have open campus and may leave during their scheduled *30-minute lunch period and any unscheduled class periods*. All students must show a school identification card upon entering the building at the North main entrance.

### **Identification Cards**

Students receive an ID with their photo at the beginning of the school year. They will be required to present their school ID upon request. Students will also need IDs when attending any WDMCS athletic or activity events. Replacement IDs will be made available, if necessary, at no cost.

If a student does not have their ID they may be asked to obtain a temporary ID through the school office. Replacement IDs will be made available, if necessary, at no cost.

In compliance with [Iowa House File 602](#), a crisis support phone number, text number, and website URL will be included on the back of every student ID.

### **Lockers**

At Valley High School, students who wish to be assigned a locker can complete an online form: <https://discover.wdmcs.org/VHSlckers>. Valley Southwoods' students can request a locker through their counselor. Lockers are provided to place belongings such as textbooks and outerwear. Lockers are school property and subject to reasonable searches. Students should keep their lockers securely locked at all times and should not share lock combinations with friends. All lockers are furnished by the school, and periodic locker checks are made throughout the year. Please do not keep valuable items in the lockers. WDMCS is not responsible for articles lost or stolen from any locker. Students need to take all academic materials, including Chromebooks, home every night.

### **Media Center, Cafeteria, and Commons (Valley High School)**

1. The Media Center is open from 7:15 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. for a quiet studying environment.
2. The Cafeteria Commons is located in the lobby area outside the cafeteria. It is open before and after school. During lunch, the students may be in the cafeteria or the courtyard outside of the cafeteria..
3. Once a student is in the Media Center/Cafeteria (during lunch) and the tardy bell has rung, the student is expected to remain in that area.
4. Utensils, dishes, and trays must remain in the cafeteria. Food and beverages of any kind are not to be taken to the Cafeteria Commons.

### **Media Center and Forum (Valley Southwoods)**

1. The Media Center is open from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. and can be used during study hall (by sign-up) or before or after school.
2. The Forum is located close to the main entry of the building and is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.
3. During lunch the students must stay in the Forum and use the restrooms in that area.
4. Utensils, dishes, and trays must remain in the cafeteria. Food and beverages of any kind are not to be taken out of the Forum.

## **Parking Regulations**

### **Valley Southwoods Parking Regulations**

Students that have a valid school permit are allowed to park in the student zones at Valley Southwoods but must comply with all state laws around the restrictions of the permit. Students do not need to fill out a form, but will be asked to provide the school with the following information:

- a valid driver's license or school permit
- plate number of any vehicle the student may drive

Students may park in the lot not marked for staff. Signage in the lots must be followed.

### **Valley Southwoods Student Parking**

Places where students CAN park:

- between two white lines

Places where students CANNOT park (restricted areas):

- Visitor parking
- Accessible parking
- Staff parking (designated by green lines and numbers)
- Fire lanes
- Self-created parking spots
- Bus concourse

Students who are parked in restricted areas or are found in violation of school permit requirements may lose their permit and ability to park on school grounds.



## Valley High School Parking Regulations

Valley students in all grades may drive their vehicles to school. To park your vehicle at Valley, you must fill out a parking form each year.

*Seniors and juniors* are eligible for a parking hangtag to park in one of Valley's five parking lots.

*Parking hang tags are given on a first come, first served basis until the lot is at capacity.* The parking form asks for the following information:

- Student name, ID, grade, address
- Driver license or permit number
- Make, model, color, license plate number of car(s) that may be driven to school
- Checkboxes to acknowledge student understands the rules and locations for student parking.

Learn more and complete parking form at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/studentparking>

If a student begins to use a vehicle that was not previously registered through the form, they need to contact the school office to add that vehicle to the list.

Juniors and seniors can park in the following Valley parking lot areas:

1. west side of the building off 39<sup>th</sup> Street,
2. north side of the building by the North Gym,
3. east side of the building adjacent to the Staplin Performing Arts Center,
4. first south lot next to the softball field, and
5. second south lot next to the baseball field.

Sophomores will be parking at Shepherd of the Valley (corner of 39th & Ashworth) on a first come, first served basis. When we are able to secure more parking spots, additional permits will be administered.

## Valley High School Student Parking

Places where students CAN park:

- Between two yellow lines

Places where students CANNOT park (restricted areas):

- Visitor parking
- Accessible parking
- Staff parking (designated by white lines and numbers)
- Health Office parking (unless with a parking pass issued from Valley Health Office)
- Fire lanes
- Self-created parking spots

Students who are parked in restricted areas or whose vehicle does not contain a valid parking tag may be subject to a parking ticket issued by the parking office. *Repeat violations can be subject to being towed.*

WDMCS seeks to cultivate a culture of belonging and inclusion. All students parking on school property are expected to adhere to [Board Policy 502.05 Freedom of Expression](#).

### **Appeal Procedure**

The Administrative Team can waive and adjust citations for parking or moving violations except where police authority applies and may deny future driving and/or parking privileges on school property or parking lots we manage. The Valley administrative team also has authority to deny future use of high school parking facilities to habitual traffic regulation violators and issue the necessary notice to the proper official for immediate vehicle impoundment.

An appeal on a parking ticket must be submitted to the student's administrator in writing within two calendar days from the date of issuance. Only one appeal per citation will be accepted.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsibly regarding public displays of affection. Prolonged embraces, kissing, fondling, or other inappropriate physical contact is not allowed. Overt public displays of affection may result in school administration working with the parent/guardian and student to address any concerns and co-create a positive solution.

### **School Dances**

Dances are considered a grades 9-12 activity. If individuals leave the area, they will not be allowed to re-enter. Specific guidelines will be shared with families for each school dance.

For prom, WDMCS juniors and seniors are able to bring a date who is under the age of 21. Prom allows a WDMCS junior or senior to invite and bring a guest that is graduated from a 9-12 school/program. To bring this guest, the parent/guardian of the WDMCS student needs to complete an online form to verify the character of the guest to Student Services. This guest must bring their license to the dance to verify identity and age. No guests 21 or older are allowed into dances. If the guest shows up with no identification, they will not be allowed into the dance under any circumstances.

### **Social Media**

Social media is a tool to be used for positive messaging and to support Valley High School and its activities. Students found to be using social media to intimidate, find humor at the expense of, bully, and/or harass others will face disciplinary action.

### **Student Dress and Appearance ([Board Policy 502](#))**

Students and their parents/guardians hold the primary responsibility for what a student chooses to wear to school each day. When a student is comfortable in what they wear, including expressing their individuality and/or personal and family culture, they can better focus on learning. WDMCS expectations for student dress and appearance are based on safety and showing respect for others.

- Students are asked to dress appropriately for the weather, including coats, hats, gloves, and boots. Any family who needs support in obtaining clothing or shoes should contact the

- school office.
- Shoes must be worn at all times for student safety.
- Clothing or other apparel promoting products illegal for use by minors or displaying obscene material, profanity, or reference to prohibited conduct are not allowed. If worn, a student will be asked to change or be given something different to wear for the day.

School administration will work with the parent/guardian and student to address any concerns and create a positive solution. Board Policy 502 gives administration final discretion regarding student dress and appearance.

### **Study Hall**

Study hall will be a designated time for academic work. Students are expected to use study hall to study, do homework, and prepare for classes. Students must have a pre-signed pass from a teacher, counselor, or administrator to be excused from study hall.

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## **Restorative Practices and Discipline**

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A safe and orderly climate is essential to any school. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner on the way to and from school, at school, on buses, and at all school-sponsored activities.

Our schools set and maintain high expectations of behavior for students. Just as in elementary and junior high, teachers will continue to work with high school students to help them identify emotions so they can work on managing stress, impulse control, and continue to develop and maintain positive relationships. We believe as students strengthen their social and emotional skills, we will see growth in their positive behavior and connections with others.

When a student violates a policy, rule, or directive of the district, including disrupting the educational environment, disciplinary action may occur. Part of that process is centered on restorative practices.

### **What are Restorative Practices?**

Restorative practices provide students and adults with an intentional, inclusive, and respectful way of thinking about, talking about, and responding to behavioral issues. School staff use restorative practices to help build and repair relationships, prioritize student agency, and de-emphasize punitive discipline in favor of communication to resolve conflict.

- Focuses primarily on relationships and secondarily on rules.
- They acknowledge that relationships are central to building community and build systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships.
- Gives a voice to the person harmed.
- Gives a voice to the person who caused harm.
- Seeks to recognize the motivation driving the misbehavior.
- Enhances a sense of responsibility to the community by engaging in collaborative problem solving.

- Empowers, changes, and grows.
- Encourages responsibility by planning for restoration.

Restorative practice does not replace disciplinary actions but it is an important step in addressing the behavior and seeking to prevent it from recurring in the future.

## **Student Behavior That May Result in Discipline**

### **Disruption to the Educational Environment**

When a student is disruptive in a classroom, at a school-related activity, on a bus, or anywhere on school property, they may be impacting another student's ability to focus, learn, and/or feel safe.

When a student uses profanity, vulgar language, and/or indecent gestures toward another individual, they are not demonstrating respect and are also impacting the educational learning environment. These actions are not allowed and may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in [Board Policy 503.01](#).

### **Harassment/Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment/Bullying ([District Policy 502.02](#))**

WDMCS is committed to providing all students a safe and civil educational environment in which all are treated with dignity and respect. It is also committed to promoting understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity of our society and will educate students about our cultural diversity and will promote tolerance of individual differences.

Harassment and/or bullying includes any electronic (such as emails, instant messages, social media, phone calls, or text messages), written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student that is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic that creates an objectively hostile school environment that:

- places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property; or
- has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health; or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance;
- or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from district services, activities, or privileges.

### **Inciting a Riot or Disturbance**

Inciting or encouraging a fight with other individuals is considered a serious misconduct. Students who promote or bring about a mass disturbance/conflict among students may face disciplinary actions. In some cases, law enforcement may be involved.

Students who record a fight or otherwise continue to promote a physical fight or assault may also face disciplinary action.

**Theft — Stealing and/or Possession of Stolen Property**

Any student who takes school property or any item of any value from another individual or is in possession of the item(s) may face disciplinary action. In some cases, law enforcement may be involved.

**Trespassing**

According to [Board Policy 502.11](#), a person who is found in or on school property after having been notified or requested by a school official to refrain from entering or remaining on school property will be considered trespassing.

**Use and/or Possession of Tobacco and Tobacco Products**

According to [Board Policy 502.06](#), the use, sale, and/or possession by a student of any tobacco or tobacco products, including vapor/electronic tobacco products and look-alike tobacco products, is prohibited while on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, and/or under school supervision. Any student violating this rule will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion by the Board of Education. Students under the age of 21 will be reported to local law enforcement authorities (Senate File 2268).

**Vandalism**

According to [Board Policy 807](#), any person found willfully damaging or defacing property belonging to the district will be held responsible for the replacement or repair of such property, and all costs will be the obligation of the offender.

**Disciplinary Actions Overview**

In addition to restorative practices mentioned earlier, some situations may result in specific disciplinary actions. These include the following.

**Detention**

Students may be assigned detention as a form of discipline. The staff member assigning the detention will communicate the expectations and date for the student to attend and inform the parent/guardian.

- **Saturday School Detention:** One form of detention occurs on Saturdays instead of after school. They may be assigned because it provides an extended period of time for the student to work on classroom assignments under the supervision of a staff member. If a student misses the detention, they may either be reassigned to a different Saturday School date or serve an in-school suspension during the week.
  - Valley Saturday School: 8 a.m. to noon
  - Valley Southwoods: 8-10 a.m.

### **In-School/Out-Of-School Suspension**

In-school and/or out-of-school suspensions may be given based on the disciplinary situation. Students are expected to work with their teachers to submit any work missed during their absence from the class.

An in-person meeting or phone call between the parent/guardian, student, and school administrator will occur prior to the student returning to school.

### **Healthy Lifestyles/Four Oaks Chemical Dependency Programming**

Students who violate [Board Policy 502.07](#) have an opportunity to take part in a chemical dependency program.

The Four Oaks Healthy Lifestyles Program was created in 2019 to provide a restorative approach to students who are suspended. By participating in this program, the student's length of suspension is greatly reduced so that the student can return to school. The support consists of building skills and finding additional resources and support for families. The education liaisons are employed by Four Oaks and focus on bridging the gap between students, their families, and the school. They use research-based skill streaming to address the concerns of the school and family.

### **Long Term Suspension/Expulsion Proceedings**

If the decision is made to recommend a long term suspension/expulsion of a student to the Board of Education, the following procedure will be followed.

1. The student will be informed that long term suspension/expulsion proceedings will be recommended.
2. The student will be on suspension until long term suspension/expulsion proceedings occur.
3. The length of the suspension/expulsion is determined during the proceedings.
4. The student is entitled to a hearing before the Board of Education and will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing.
5. The student will be notified of the specific charges.
6. The student shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel.
7. An expelled student may be readmitted by the Board only.

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## **Safety and Health**

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### **Bicycles/Rollerblades/Roller Shoes/Scooters/Skateboards**

- We recommend wearing bicycle helmets.
- Bicycles should be walked on school property and parked in the bike racks.
- Bicycle locks are encouraged.
- The school district is not responsible for students riding bicycles to and from school and assumes no responsibility for bicycles on the school grounds.

At Valley, for safety reasons, rollerblades, roller shoes, scooters, and skateboards will be required to be either locked away or put in the student's locker.

At Valley Southwoods, for safety reasons, rollerblades, roller shoes, scooters, and skateboards are not allowed on school property.

### **Communicating Student Safety Concerns**

WDMCS is committed to fostering an equitable and affirming learning environment in which each student and staff is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. Because we prioritize creating a healthy learning environment for each student, we want to know if a student experiences or perceives bullying or harassment. Please reach out to your student's teacher, counselor, or school administrator to express your concerns. If you do not believe these steps resolved the situation, a helpful next step is to submit a complaint form. This form can be found in [Board Policy 502.02, Equal Educational Opportunities: Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Sexual Misconduct Toward Students](#).

If other safety concerns arise, please contact the school and ask to speak with an administrator or counselor. If the concern is urgent, call 911.

### **Safety Drills**

WDMCS conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of emergency protocols and procedures. Each school in our district performs tornado, lockdown, evacuation, ELF (Evacuate, Lockdown, Fight), and fire drills. Special assistance will be provided for students needing specific supports.

### **Severe Weather Warnings**

In the event of a severe weather warning, students will be retained in the building and moved to places of greatest safety until the danger is passed. It is important that all school telephone lines be kept open at this time.

### **Security**

Electronic locks have been installed on all school exit doors. The purpose of the security system is to allow controlled access to the building. Visitors and late-arriving students will need to come to the front doors and use the intercom system to gain entrance. Under no circumstances should anyone allow an unknown or unauthorized person to enter through any other door.

## **Health**

### **Ambassadors (Valley High School only)**

The Valley Ambassadors are a group of students selected to be mentors for new students. The ambassadors assist at various Valley High School activities. Contact the counseling office for more information.

### **Absences (Reasons)**

Regular attendance is a very important part of your child's education. **If your child is ill, please call the school office before the start of the school day.**

Students should stay or go home if they have one or more of these symptoms:

- fever over 100.4 within the last 24 hours
- **new** loss of taste or smell
- vomiting two or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is known to be caused by a condition that's not contagious
- conditions that suggest the possible presence of a more serious illness, including
  - fever
  - rash
  - sluggishness
  - persistent crying
  - irritability
  - difficulty breathing
- diarrhea (*must be diarrhea free in the 24 hours prior to returning to school*)
- impetigo (*must stay home until 24 hours after treatment has started*)
  - Impetigo is a skin infection with erupting sores usually under the nose or by the lips. This drainage is generally described as “a golden crust.”

You can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by keeping your child home from school or child care until the illness is no longer infectious.

### **Services of the School Nurse**

If a student becomes ill during the school day, permission or a pass from class will be requested, and evaluation will occur from the school nurse. The nurse will use professional judgment and follow the [WDMCS Illness Guidelines](#) to determine if it is necessary for the student to go home. To ensure student safety, under no circumstances are students allowed to go home or leave student grounds without contacting the school nurse or the office. In cases when parent/guardians cannot be contacted, the school will contact the listed emergency contact. In the event of an emergency and no one can be reached, emergency services will be called and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital if necessary.

### **Student Injuries**

Students who suffer injuries should be brought to the nurse's office. The school nurse maintains a record of all accidents resulting in injuries to students. Any change in the student's condition occurring throughout the day should also be made known to the nurse. Injury to a student shall be promptly reported by the building administrator or designee to Administrative Services on the WDMCS Student Incident Report.

### **Health Fact Sheets**

The district website has a variety of health-related resources, including fact sheets on:

- COVID-19
- Bed Bugs
- Fifth Disease
- Head Lice
- Influenza



- Meningitis
- Mono
- MRSA
- Pink Eye
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat

To learn more, visit <https://discover.wdmcs.org/health-resources>.

### **Health Records**

By keeping adequate health histories, we are better able to evaluate, understand, and be responsive to your child's individual needs. Please send a note or call the school nurse regarding any developments concerning your child's health. This would include hospitalizations, all medications (type, amount, and time given), fractures, all recent diagnoses of medical conditions, and any other medical information that would be pertinent to the student's performance and attendance.

Student's medical information is collected within a Health section of their record in Infinite Campus. Confidentiality of this information is a priority. This tab is only visible to nursing staff and a very small number of other district employees who help support nurses.

- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [506.03 Student Records, Use Of Records And Student Rosters](#)

### **Immunizations and Health Screenings**

Iowa Law requires all students, grades PK-12, to have evidence of a valid Iowa Immunization Certificate, Provisional Certificate of Immunization, or Iowa Certificate of Immunization Exemption on file to be enrolled in the WDMCS. This certificate may be obtained from your provider's office or from the school nurse. Students with immunizations partially completed will be issued a Provisional Certificate allowing for a maximum of 60 days to complete the remaining immunizations. Communication will be provided to parents/guardians regarding immunization requirements and timelines, and further assistance will be provided from the school nurse. If the student hasn't met the requirements at the end of the provisional period, it is necessary by law to exclude the student from school. Student's transferring from another school system within the United States may be granted a Provisional Certificate until documentation of current immunizations are obtained and validated.

To support healthy students, Iowa's health screening programs are regulated by the state and are implemented by the schools. These screenings include: immunizations, dental, vision, and lead. Hearing screenings are also conducted by audiologists from the Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) annually for students in grades K-2 and grade 5. Please notify your school nurse prior to the communicated screening dates if you would not like your student to participate. Further information regarding school screenings can be found [on our website under Health Screenings](#) and will be provided by your school nurse.

- [Learn more online from Iowa Department of Education: Student Health Requirements.](#)

- [Learn more online about immunizations, health screenings, including dental, hearing, and vision screenings.](#)

### **Medication Guidelines**

- The Health Office must have written authorization from the parent/guardian. Please include the student's name, name of medication, amount to be given, time of medication is to be given, reason for the medication, and parent/guardian signature.
- The medication must be in the original current container (**NO** plastic bags or envelopes with loose pills).
- The directions on the medication container must match the parent/guardian authorization.
- **ALL** medications (prescription and over-the-counter) must be kept in the Health Office at all times. The only exception to this policy is if a student has provided a completed Self-Administration Consent form that is signed by a healthcare provider. This provides a student authorization to self-administer asthma/other airway constricting disease medication or Epinephrine auto-injector medications.

### **Counselors**

The counseling program is structured to help all students develop their educational, social, career, and personal strengths and to become responsible and productive citizens. There is a commitment to individual uniqueness and the maximum development of human potential. These areas are addressed through individual meetings, large-group presentations, and small-group offerings. Counselors are also consultants for parents/guardians as well as members of the school staff and act as a liaison between school and community agencies. Students will also explore career interests and options and discuss high school and post-secondary requirements leading to the creation of a four-year plan.

Students may visit with any of the counselors. The counselors' offices are located across the hall from student services. Teachers are encouraged to refer students to their counselor and parent/guardians may request special conferences. Students are encouraged to schedule a conference with their counselor.

### **Sexual Assault Support**

Our goal to have a safe, educational learning environment means empowering students to speak up and inform school personnel if they are the victim of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or assault on or off school grounds. All students have the right to attend school and not have to experience an environment of fear, shame, or guilt. Students are encouraged to contact one of the following resources: a counselor, school administrator, or WDMCSD Title IX Coordinator, Megan Thole, Human Resources director.

For more specific information, please reference [Board Policy 502.02](#) (Equal Educational Opportunities: Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Sexual Misconduct Toward Students).

An additional resource is the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault website: [www.iowacasa.org](http://www.iowacasa.org)

If that is not a viable option, please contact: Polk County Crisis & Advocacy Services 2309 Euclid, Polk County River Place, Des Moines, IA 50310 515-286-3600 (main) or 515-286-2027 (direct) In speaking with a crisis counselor, it does not mean having to talk or report to the police; any discussion you have with the counselor will remain confidential and parent/guardians will not be notified unless given permission. These services and counselors are available 24 hours a day to help guide you in understanding the proper steps for you.

### **Student Assistance Program (SAP)**

WDMCS contracts the services of Employee and Family Resources for our Student Assistance Program. If you need assistance with family or school issues, call 515-244-6090 to speak to a counselor or schedule an appointment. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Counselor sessions to assess problems are provided at no cost to you. When additional services are needed, the student assistance counselor will refer you to an appropriate, beneficial and affordable resource.

School-based therapy services are available in each school building. Students have access to a licensed therapist in the building for appointments while minimizing travel time off campus. Families enroll students for services and are responsible for the cost. Contact the school counselor or principal for information about school-based therapy.

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# **West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education & Learning Resource Center**

## **West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education**

The West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education holds regular meetings usually at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Most meetings are conducted in the Community Room at the Learning Resource Center, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines. All meetings are open to the public unless the Board calls for a closed session. For an item to be considered for placement on the agenda, interested citizens must submit the item in writing to the Superintendent's Office by noon on the Wednesday preceding the regular meeting. Most meetings are streamed on the district's YouTube channel — <https://www.youtube.com/@wdmcs>.

During each meeting, an open forum time is conducted when citizens may speak to the Board. Individuals have up to five minutes to speak.

Seven elected members serve four-year terms without pay on the School Board. Elections are held in odd-numbered years. A new president and vice president are elected every September. In addition, up to three high school students are elected each spring to serve their senior year as non-voting members. [View current Board of Education information online.](#)

## **West Des Moines Community Schools Learning Resource Center**

3550 Mills Civic Parkway  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265-5556  
Phone: 515-633-5000

## **Superintendency**

Superintendent Dr. Matt Adams  
Chief Human Resources Officer Josie Lewis  
Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services Michelle Lettington  
Chief Financial Officer Paul Bobek  
School/Community Relations Director Laine Buck

## **General Information**

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### **Area Education Agency (AEA) Services**

Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) 11 supports educators, families, and the community to improve student learning. Heartland is one of nine area education agencies in Iowa created to ensure educational opportunities for children from birth to age 21. Support to local schools is provided in three areas: educational services, media services, and special education services (assessment, consultation, speech-language, hearing screenings, and others). Visit the [Heartland AEA website](#) for more information.

### **West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation**

The West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation benefits the students, teachers, and school district by offering quality fundraising resources for WDMCS.

The Foundation began in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit organization that works closely with the school administration, staff, and community to provide resources for students. They strive to encourage student participation, creative teaching, and community-school partnerships by making funds available to all 13 schools in the district. [Learn more about the WDMCS Foundation online.](#)

## Departments

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### Administrative Services

Administrative Services oversees the Business Services, Nutrition Services, Operations, and Transportation departments. The WDMCS Chief Financial Officer (CFO) leads a talented group of individuals who support Business Services, Nutrition Services, Operations, and Transportation.

### Business Services

The learning that occurs in our classrooms is supported by quality facilities and sound financial management. The department works with representatives in the community and staff to ensure our buildings and funding support student learning. The department oversees the District's budget, manages accounting, and generates financial reporting to provide transparency to its stakeholders. [Learn more about WDMCS budgets online.](#)

### Nutrition Services

Nutrition Services participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. Meals and snacks must meet the standards set forth by the USDA. The department oversees breakfasts and lunches throughout the school year and helps provide a summer food service program to ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals. [Learn more about nutrition services, free and reduced meal qualifications, and meal pricing online](#)

### Operations

Operations provides maintenance and custodial services for more than 1.5 million square feet of space, including more than 500 classrooms. It also provides services that support the delivery of education to our students. [Learn more about current projects online.](#)

### Transportation

Transportation strives to serve the needs of our students by providing safe, efficient transportation to school and school-related activities. Free transportation is provided to the following groups meeting the listed criteria (Iowa Code Section 285.1):

- Grades K-8 students living more than two miles from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence.
- Grades 9-12 students living more than three miles away from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence.
- Involuntary Transfers, who are students transferred by the district to a school other than their designated attendance center.

Students who do not qualify for free transportation and live outside the walk zone for their assigned school are eligible for paid transportation. Transportation is not available for families who live inside the walk zone.

Any student who lives in the paid transportation area and qualifies for the free and reduced-priced meal program may also apply for free and reduced-priced bus pass fees. Please contact your school's office to apply.

A voluntary transfer is a student who attends a school other than the assigned school within the district due to a family request granted by the district. Voluntary transfer students may ride a district school bus if they meet the established criteria.

For more detailed information on transportation, including registration and payments, [visit the transportation section of the WDMCS website.](#)

## **Communications**

[School/Community Relations](#) supports WDMCS districtwide and school-specific communication. From weather alerts and crisis notifications to event reminders and sharing student success stories, School/Community Relations provides timely, relevant information to district staff, students, families, and the broader community.

When school must be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early because of weather conditions or other emergencies, the School/Community Relations Department works to inform district families and staff in a timely manner. [Learn more about specific cancellation and closings procedures online.](#)

## **Community Education**

Community Education supports and serves students, families, and community through classes, before and after school care, intercultural outreach, service opportunities, and facility rentals. [Learn more about the opportunities available through Community Education online.](#)

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

In partnership with students, staff, and the community, WDMCS is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where each student and staff can belong and thrive. Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in WDMCS are centered on the humanity of our stakeholders.

The WDMCS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department partners with students, staff, and families to co-create and support Affinity Groups. There are currently two affinity groups in WDMCS: Families of Students of Color and LGBTQIA+ Family Support Group. Please reach out to your school administrator for more information.

The district is actively engaged in ongoing equity training and learning opportunities for students and staff. Equity work is supported by equity leads and teams at each of our school buildings. [Learn more about our DEI work online.](#)

## **Human Resources**

Human Resources oversees one of our district's greatest resources — its employees. The department strives to provide students and parents with a talented, knowledgeable, and dedicated workforce by:

- reaching out locally and nationally to recruit quality and diverse staff members.
- supporting professional development and training.
- fostering an engaging and caring work environment.

Human Resources leads a talented group of individuals who support more than 1,900 employees, district substitutes, and a retiree recognition program. [Learn more about the Human Resources Department and available career opportunities online.](#)

## **Teaching and Learning Services**

WDMCS offers a comprehensive education with variety, depth, and rigor. The associate superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services leads a talent group of individuals who oversee the following areas:

### **Curriculum**

WDMCS curriculum is embedded in sound, successful, and researched-based perspectives, yet continues to be a fluid, dynamic instrument of the present.

Teachers endeavor to implement ideas and skills that reflect the ever-changing technology and cultural changes of our society and needs of our learners. [Learn more about WDMCS curriculum online.](#)

### **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

At WDMCS, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is designed instruction that supports English Learners (ELs) in developing and enhancing their English language skills in order to acquire academic content and language. ESOL instruction is primarily in English.

All new students to WDMCS are required to fill out a Home Language Survey which is completed through the online enrollment process. If it is evident the student has a native language other than English, the child and family are referred to the child's designated school for registration and assessment for possible language services. [Learn more about ESOL services online.](#)

### **Gifted/Talented (GT) Program**

The West Des Moines Gifted/Talented Program is a comprehensive K-12 program designed to identify and serve students who possess outstanding abilities, talents, and potential for high performance when compared with same-aged peers such that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. In addition to differentiated classroom experiences, students meet in small groups in their own buildings with specially trained teachers to work on group and individual projects according to their needs, abilities, and interests. [Learn more about GT online.](#)

### **Youth Who Are Experiencing Homelessness ([Board Policy 501.16](#))**

West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) believes all students should have access to a free, appropriate public education. WDMCS will ensure that youth who are experiencing homelessness and youth have equal/equitable access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth.

"Youth who are experiencing homelessness" means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled up");
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children may qualify if they are living in circumstances described above.

[Learn more about enrollment procedures and support services available online.](#)

### **Home Schooling**

The WDMCS Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) has been offering support to families who wish to educate their children at home since the early 1990s. Today, more than 125 home-schooled students are enrolled in grades K-12. Teacher assistance and enrichment classes like writing, science, physical education, Spanish, drama, and art are provided to supplement parents' home schooling efforts. Additionally, a wide array of field trips are provided throughout the year. [Learn more about home schooling support online.](#) Visit the [HSAP website](#).



## Special Education

The goals for our Special Education program are aligned with state law and the federal Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) law, which:

- Assures all children with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet their unique needs.
- Protects children's rights and the rights of their parents or guardians.
- Assists state and local districts in providing education that assesses students' strengths and weaknesses and assures the effectiveness of the educational efforts.

Families who move to the West Des Moines Community Schools and have a child with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will find similar student-focused programming and services at each of our schools. [Learn more about Special Education support services online.](#)

## Technology

West Des Moines Community Schools strives to create a technology-rich environment for its entire learning community. It has been a state and national leader in making a wide range of technologies available to students, staff, and other learners.

In order to provide cost effective and reliable services, the district utilizes a fiber optic wide area network that connects all district facilities. The creation of this network was created through WestNET, a cooperative partnership between the West Des Moines Community Schools, City of West Des Moines, City of Clive, City of Urbandale, and the Iowa Communications Network.

[Learn more about WDMCS technology services online.](#)

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## Annual Notices and Board Policies

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### Annual Notices

State and federal regulations, as well as some district policies, require the district to annually post certain notifications to the public. Please reference the list of annual notices on the WDMCS website at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/annual-notices>.

**Board Policies** — <https://discover.wdmcs.org/board-policies>

- [502.02 Equal Educational Opportunities: Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Sexual Misconduct Toward Students](#)
- [503.01 Discipline](#)



3550 Mills Civic Parkway | West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-5000 | [www.wdmcs.org](http://www.wdmcs.org)