



The Ultimate Family Guide to West Mercer Elementary Updated: August 2024



Everything you need to know, all in one place.

West Mercer is a place of joy where all students, staff,
and families commit to grow, empower, and value each other.
We believe that our capacity to learn is unlimited.

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This document has been put together to help West Mercer families find information quickly and easily. You are encouraged to keep this guide handy for your reference. The [Mercer Island School District website](#) is also a great resource for information related to West Mercer and the district services at-large.

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Welcome to West Mercer Elementary

Principal's Message

Dear Families,

Welcome to the West Mercer Wolfpack! Thank you for your support and partnership as we work together to support your child's educational journey. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside you and your scholar throughout their time at West Mercer.

I began as Principal at West Mercer in the 2021-2022 school year. The year prior to my arrival at West, I served as an Associate Principal at both Island Park and Northwood Elementary schools. Before joining the Mercer Island School District, I served as an elementary teacher in Seattle Public Schools. I earned my Administrative Credential from Seattle University, my Masters in Teaching from the University of Washington (Go Dawgs!), and my undergraduate degree from the University of San Francisco. I have served in both public and non-profit educational settings for nearly 20 years.

I am a Tacoma native and still have many roots in the South Sound. Currently, I live in the Central District in Seattle with my partner, our 7-month old baby, and our two (often naughty) dogs. I am an outdoor enthusiast and love almost any sport that gets me moving. (My newest sport is windsurfing!) Beyond the school day, you are likely to find me biking, climbing, boxing, attending sports events, and spending time with my friends and family in and around the Seattle region.

I am a life-long learner and value relationships, growth, and innovation. I enjoy taking a problem and working with others to find creative and innovative ways to solve it. I believe all students deserve a meaningful, rigorous, and engaging educational experience - one in which they are seen and valued for who they are and are supported to reach their full potential.

I feel lucky to have a job where I can work alongside 400+ inspiring young people each day, who teach me more than I will ever teach them. I also feel fortunate to work collaboratively with our dedicated West Mercer staff and community in support of our scholars.

My door is always open, please don't hesitate to reach out and connect.

In Partnership,

Megan Isakson
Principal, West Mercer

Important Contact Information

General Contact Information

West Mercer Main Office: 206-236-3430
Absentee Alert: 206-236-3434
Transportation Office (Bus): 206-236-3338
District Emergency Number: 206-236-3366

Administrative Assistant: Lynn Lawrence, lynn.lawrence@mercerislandschools.org
Principal: Megan Isakson, megan.isakson@mercerislandschools.org

Mercer Island School District

The Mercer Island School District consists of four elementary schools—Island Park, Lakeridge, West Mercer, and Northwood, one middle school—Islander Middle School, and two high schools—Mercer Island High and Crest Learning Center. Information about the Mercer Island School District can be found on the [MISD Website](#).



Board Policy 0001

Values

Students are the priority. We believe in:

- Supporting the whole child
- Creating inclusive and equitable learning settings
- Ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive
- Providing rigorous and challenging learning

Vision

Inspiring our students to be lifelong learners as they create their futures.

Mission

The District will foster learning by engaging students in thinking critically, solving problems creatively, and working collaboratively.

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Operational Expectation 1800 OE-1 Student Focused Fundamentals

In accordance with the values, vision and mission stated in Board Policy 0001, the District will strive to achieve the following fundamentals, goals and objectives:

1. Create a personalized learning environment where differentiated instruction, student-centered education and varied learning opportunities are responsive to students' strengths, needs, interests and passions.
2. Maintain the highest learning standards in the areas of fine arts; health and physical education; English language arts; mathematics; financial education, science; environment and sustainability; social studies, world languages; computer science and educational technology.
3. Develop self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making and citizenship.
4. Engage students in analytical and critical thinking in order to identify and address global concerns.
5. Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.

School Schedule

Office Opens	8:30 AM
Start Bell	9:15 AM
Grades K-2 Recess	10:30-10:45 AM
Grades 3-5 Recess	10:45-11:00 AM
Grades K-2 Lunch	12:10-12:30 (Recess 12:30-12:50)
Grades 3-5 Lunch	12:35-12:55 (Recess 12:55-1:15)

WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL 2:05 PM

Grades 3-5 Recess	2:20-2:35 PM
Grades K-2 Recess	2:35-2:50 PM
School Day Ends (M, T, Th, F)	3:45 PM
Office Closes	4:00 PM

Specialist Schedule for 2024-2025

Kindergarten - 1:05-1:50pm MTTTHF, 1:05-1:35pm W

1st Grade - 1:50-2:35pm MTTTHF, 12:35-1:05pm W

2nd Grade - 3:00-3:45pm MTTTHF, 1:35-2:05pm W

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3rd Grade - 11:00-11:45am MTTHF, 10:50-11:20am W

4th Grade - 9:15-10:00am MTTHF, 9:15-9:45am W

5th Grade - 10:00-10:45am MTTHF, 9:45-10:15 W

Our students have specialist class every day - 45 minutes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 30 minutes on Wednesday when we have a shorter day. Our specialist classes include PE, Music, Art, and Library. (Our 3rd grade cohort has 4 class sections this year and has one additional specialist class which focuses on a combination of enrichment in the arts and community building. This specialist section has been dubbed “Vibe and Thrive.”) Our specialist schedule - with the exception of 3rd grade - operates on a 3-week (A, B, C week) rotation cycle in order to meet the required minutes of specialist instruction time. Our 3rd grade sections operate on a 4-week rotation (A, B, C, and D week). Your child’s classroom teacher will provide details regarding the A, B, C (and D, if applicable) week specialist rotation in their communications and/or at Curriculum & Community night.

School Hours

Normal school hours are 9:15 AM to 3:45 PM, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 9:15 AM to 2:05 PM on Wednesday. There is only one bell at 9:15, which is the starting bell. (We no longer have the 9:10 transition bell.) The playground and school grounds are unsupervised before and after normal school hours. *Children playing on school grounds outside of normal school hours must be under the supervision of an adult. Please plan and provide adult supervision to your child if they are on school grounds before 9:00 AM or after 3:45 PM (2:15 PM on Wednesdays).*

If you are arriving late to school, please walk your child/children into the main office to check them in with our office secretary, Ms. Courtney. You will need to sign your child/children in at this time.

Teachers often are in their classrooms before and after school preparing for the school day, grading papers, collaborating with their peers, attending meetings and working on curriculum. In consideration of their busy schedules, please schedule an appointment if you would like to meet with them during these times.

West Mercer School Staff for 2024-2025

Certificated Staff

K - Claire Phillips, Michele Frisch, Marya Swenson (Leave of Absence Substitute Aug.-Dec.)/Tara Hutschreider (Jan.-June)

1st - Kelly Flaherty, Sarah Lim, Kayle Ngazimbi

2nd - Miriam Eve, Tay Kim, Zen Morrison

3rd - Melissa Hersey, Jose Feliciano (Leave of Absence Substitute Aug.-Dec.)/Lindsey Adamson-Che (Jan.-June), Leslie Scheurich, Alexa Damir

4th - Rochelle Robinson, Tracy Hatt, Carly Adams

5th - Kirsten Bourke, Julie Langley, David Baxter

Special Services Teachers - Kaylee Hill, Nicki Winder

Specialists - Casey Alin, Tracy Richardson, Clara Kurtenbach, Tanya Sylvester, Angela Carey (3rd Grade/Adaptive Music & PE)

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LSP - Kay Walker
ELD - Roxane Chan
Coach - Abbey Espegard

Classified Staff

Office - Lynn Lawrence, Courtney Kinsman-Cordero
Nurse - Anthony Harper
Gen Ed Paras - Aaron Elefson, Cody Layton, Deepa Malik, Nancy Ulrich, Jolene McClerkin
Special Services Paras - Diana Apacible, Tammy Hackett, Cameron Bol, Emily Tommasini, Autumn Laasanen, Melissa Onyango
Student Success Coach (SEL) - Stephanie Moffat
LSP Para - Laurel Baker
ELD Para - Mona Satpathy
Tech Specialist - Noel Kalthoff

Custodial Staff

Cuong Ngo
Canh Ta

ESAs

Psych - Courtney Deveny
SLP - Sreya Santhosh
PT - Nicole Nelson
OT - TBD

MIYFS Counselor - Anna Orton

The “Nuts and Bolts” of West Mercer

Here’s the place to find the basic information you’ll need.

Visitors

If you are visiting West Mercer, please check in at the badge kiosk in the front office vestibule. Please bring your Driver’s License/Identification Card with you to scan. If you need any support or have questions, please also check in with our office secretary at the front desk. If this is your first time volunteering with West Mercer, you will need to have completed all volunteer paperwork (available online), provide a copy of your driver’s license (on-site), and be cleared via a background check. All of these items need to be completed at least 48 hours in advance.

If you are visiting our school, please silence or turn off your phone. If you must text or take a call, please ensure students are supervised and remove yourself from the learning environment before you do so. Thank you for limiting cell phone usage while at school.

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School Calendar

[MISD calendars](#) are available online on the district website. Important events will also be included in the West Mercer PTA's newsletters and on [WM PTSA website](#).

Dropping Off Forgotten Items

If you need to get an item to your child please bring it to the front office so as to not disturb the teaching and learning environment. We will deliver these items to your student at an appropriate time that won't interrupt learning.

Lost and Found

The Lost-and-Found is always full of coats, sweatshirts and other items. Please check it regularly for your child's lost items.

Please label all removable clothing, water bottles, lunch boxes etc. Every attempt will be made to return lost items to students. Items not claimed will be donated to local charities.

School Supplies

You have a few choices to help you get school supplies:

- We offered a pre-purchase option in the spring through SchoolKidz. If you signed up for it, your child's supplies will be delivered to their classroom. No further action is needed; you are ready!
- If you didn't sign up for the pre-purchase option or are a new family, use the supply list on our West Mercer website and purchase from your favorite store. *We are asking that these supplies be brought to school for the open house on Tuesday, August 27th or on the first day of school.*

Logo Spiritwear

West Mercer Logo shirts and sweatshirts are available for purchase through the PTA. Stay tuned for communication from the PTA with the link to order your WM swag!

Library Books

Each classroom has library class as part of our Specialist Rotation. Classes may also sign up for additional library class periods. During library, students are able to check out and return library books. Guidelines for the number of books and length of borrowing time varies by grade. Remember our wonderful Teacher-Librarian is available to help if your child needs reading suggestions.

RSVP (Qmlativ/Skyward)

The RSVP process allows families to verify information online. Once you have registered through this process, you will have access to your child's class information, attendance, food service account information, and report cards and test scores. You can learn more about how to register and access this account on this [webpage](#).

School Lunch and Snacks

Students may bring a lunch from home, or purchase a school lunch. Additionally, students may want to bring a healthy snack for a classroom snack break. *Students are to eat their own food. Trading food items is not allowed as a precaution against food allergies.* When packing a lunch or snack, please help your child by using containers or packaged food items that they can manage to open on their own.

If you have a child with serious food allergies, please consult the school nurse to get information on establishing a plan with the school.

School Lunch Program

Information about the [school lunch program](#) can be found on the District website. There are two lunch options served daily, one of which is a vegetarian choice. Students choosing school lunch will be asked to make a lunch selection in the morning as part of attendance procedures. The lunch menu is posted on the website each month.

Lunch Accounts

Money may be added to your child's account online via [Omlativ \(Skyward\) Family Access Account](#) or in the front office. *Cash or checks can be dropped off in the school front office. Checks should be made payable to "Mercer Island School District-Food Services".* Credit and debit cards are NOT accepted in the front office.

Free and Reduced Lunches

Under provisions of the National School Lunch Act, free and reduced price lunches are available to children of families who qualify. In certain cases, foster children are also eligible for these benefits.

The [Free/Reduced Lunch Application](#) information can be found online. Occasionally, a change in family income or size during the school year may qualify students who were previously not eligible. Should this be your case, please complete the form or contact the Director of Food Service. We encourage all families who might qualify to submit the application.

Healthy Foods Focus

At West Mercer, we do all that we can to foster a healthy and nutritious school environment. At the school we focus on non-food incentives and rewards. As a parent/guardian, we encourage you to support this effort by: 1) sending your child to school with healthy snacks and lunches if you don't participate in the school lunch program and 2) providing nutritious party snacks if you choose to bring them for classroom celebrations.

Attendance

Students develop attendance patterns early in their school career. By keeping students home from school only when necessary, parents/guardians can help their child develop good attendance patterns. *As soon as you know your student will be absent, please call the school Absentee Alert number at 206-236-3434.* Leave the name of your child, the teacher and the dates and reason for their absence on the recording. As a safety protocol, if your child is not in school and you have not reported his/her absence on the Absentee Alert line, a school staff member will call you to verify the reason for the absence.

Student Sign-In/Sign-Out

Students must be signed in and out from the office whenever their arrival or departure is not at the normal time, regardless of the reason. For security reasons, please follow proper school check-out procedures.

Illness

If your child is ill please keep him/her home. We do not have adequate facilities to care for ill children nor do we want to expose other students and staff to their illness.

When children become ill at school, the parent/designated person is called to pick them up. *It is extremely*

important to keep the office up to date with any telephone number changes. It is important to provide a local Mercer Island phone number for emergency contacts. MISD policy states that a child with a fever of 100 or greater must be kept home for 24 hours after a normal temperature is reached without the aid of fever-reducing medications. A child who has vomited must also be kept home for 24-hours after the last vomiting incident.

Tardiness

Classroom doors are opened at 9:10 AM and our final bell rings at 9:15 AM. Students arriving after this time must check in with the front office and receive a pass before going to their classroom. Frequent tardiness is disruptive to a child's learning and the classroom environment; please help your child arrive at school on time.

Excused Absences Excused absences include: illness, medical, or dental appointments, bereavement, and unforeseen emergencies. All absences must be reported on the Absentee Alert number at 206-236-3434. Per OSPI attendance and family communication policies, we are required to reach out and communicate with families when students reach a certain threshold of absences, regardless of absence (excused or unexcused) status.

Pre-Arranged Absences

On an increasing basis the Mercer Island Elementary School administration and teachers are experiencing difficulties because students are missing school for prolonged periods of time associated with family vacations. It is likely that parents are not aware of the impact such absences have on their child's education and on the ability of the school to function in a manner that serves the children best. If your child will be absent three consecutive days or more for a non-illness or non-emergency reason please follow the steps below:

- Families must fill out an [Elementary Notification of Absence Form](#) for each child and send it to the office at least two weeks before the pre-planned absence occurs.
- Teachers will not prepare special homework packets in advance for families to take with them on vacation.
- Upon a student's return from an absence, parents are responsible for reviewing with their child/children work that was missed.
- Teachers will not be able to make-up lessons or work missed from class time with students.
- Children will miss some learning that cannot be made up.
- It is recognized that there is educational value to travel. It is highly desirable for vacation activities to be blended into a child's education. Examples include keeping a journal or scrapbook for travel; digital records of trips, reading related books, maps or other educational material. At the discretion of the teacher, some makeup work may be substituted for travel experiences.

Early Dismissals

If your child needs to leave early from the classroom for any reason, please make sure your child's teacher is aware of this dismissal ahead of time. It is extremely helpful to plan your dismissal such that it does not interfere with any recesses. When you arrive at school to pick up your child, please report to the Main Office. Your child will be called out of the classroom or off of the playground. The transition process from class/playground can take upwards of 10 minutes. Please allow for a 10-minute grace period when picking up your child for early dismissal.

Early dismissal pick-up is only allowed until 3:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 1:50pm on Wednesday. Thank you for your attention to these procedures.

Vacations

We encourage families to follow the school calendar when scheduling a family vacation. When children are missing from the classroom, the dynamics of the classroom and learning are affected. Scheduled district vacation days are identified on the [school calendar](#). If you cannot follow the school schedule and you will be gone for 3 or more days, you must complete the [Elementary Notification of Absence Form](#). Absences due to vacation are unexcused per District policy.

Communication

West Mercer is a busy place with a lot going on! To ensure clear and open communication, each teacher maintains their own classroom communication plan which they will share with you at the Curriculum/Community Night in early fall. Both parents/guardians and teachers have busy schedules, so be sure to note the best form of communication for your particular teacher. If you would like to meet with your teacher in person, please make an appointment ahead of time. This allows the teacher time to focus and prepare for your meeting. As a general rule, telephone calls and email messages will be returned within 48 hours.

West Mercer Website

We continue to add and update to the [West Mercer website](#).

West Mercer Instagram

Check out (and follow!) our [West Mercer Elementary Instagram](#) account for day-to-day stories from our teaching and learning community.

Weekly Wrap Up

On Friday of each week, Principal Isakson shares a “Weekly Wrap Up” message (and word of the week) with the school community, as well as a connected read aloud book. These messages can be found on our website [here](#).

West Mercer Directory

The West Mercer Directory is available on the PTA website with a West Mercer PTA membership.

Monthly Principal Newsletter

Expect to receive a monthly newsletter from Principal Isakson with school updates, etc.

District Announcement Emails

The email address that you provide in your child’s enrollment paperwork will be used for District and school email communications and announcements. Please make sure this is up to date. If you feel that you may not be receiving MISD communications, please let us know.

Email Distribution Method: Parent email addresses from the Qmlativ (Skyward) system will be used as the initial distribution list for West Mercer communication. If you wish to subscribe to our communication with a different email address, log into your parent Qmlativ (Skyward) account to make

this change.

Backpack Mail

Check those backpacks! Notices, communications, homework, and completed student work will come home regularly from your child's teacher. Check your child's backpack daily.

Classroom Email Lists

Each classroom teacher utilizes email for classroom communication. Classroom emails might include information about classroom activities, special events, and teacher questions. Teachers use the "blind cc" feature so that your email privacy is protected. PTA gathers family email addresses separately. Due to privacy concerns the school will not share family contact information with anyone, including the PTA.

Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is an advisory team consisting of parents/guardians, a Board member, and the school administrator. The purpose of the PAC is to inform, encourage, and provide opportunities for parents and community members to be involved in the school's instructional program and improvement processes. By definition, the PAC is an informational and advisory body. A request for interested volunteers to join the PAC group goes out every fall. Once this group is formed and the representatives are confirmed, the school community will receive their contact information. If you have a question or concern about the school community related to the School Improvement Plan, ask your Parent Advisory Council representative.

PTA Website

You can find out more information about our very active PTA on our website [West Mercer PTA](#).

Announcements

There is a virtual board detailing upcoming school events and information in the front office vestibule. There are also often posters along the car loop fence with information about events.

Emergency Contact Information

Each fall parents/guardians are requested to complete the RSVP process online. You will have the opportunity to review and update family information and who to contact in an emergency, including who is authorized to pick up your child from school. It is essential that this information be kept up to date as it is vitally important when your child is ill, or in an emergency. Please keep us informed of any changes. It is important to have at least 2 emergency contacts. It is strongly preferred that these be Mercer Island contacts for ease of access.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The parent/guardian of each child will have one formal parent/teacher conference scheduled in the fall. If you want to discuss your child's school work or progress at any other time, please schedule an appointment in advance with your child's teacher. This allows your child's teacher adequate time to prepare for a meaningful exchange of information.

Privacy Policy

You will find information about [FERPA](#). This link will contain a Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act which outlines information collected by the school and its scope of use. As a part of that form, parents and/or guardians of children can submit an [annual exception request*](#). If families desire to be opted out of various information uses for the current school year, return this completed form to the school on or before the 10th day of school.

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** Please note that if you determine that signing this form is best for your family, your child's name and/or work will NOT appear in the directory, on 5th grade sweatshirts, in the yearbook, on websites or in other public contexts. This means that you will not receive any PTA communications or key pieces of information from the PTA including monthly newsletters, unless you sign up with the PTA directly.*

Transportation

At West Mercer the safety of our children is paramount. Our busy location will always be a challenge. If your child's neighborhood is provided bus service, it is a safe, environmentally-friendly option. If you are in a walking zone, please review the designated safe walk routes and teach your children to walk to school safely.

Buses

Bus service is available for many students based on their home location in the West Mercer boundaries. Students in a bus zone are highly encouraged to use bus transportation to and from school in order to keep traffic in and around the parking lot to a minimum. There is a separate (south side) parking lot for bus use only and students will be dropped off there in the morning and picked up in the same place after school. Staff will be supervising the area upon arrival and dismissal. You can find information about bus transportation [here](#).

Note that Kindergarteners will not be dropped off at their bus stop without an adult meeting them unless a release form has been signed.

Students will not be allowed on a bus they don't normally ride without a bus pass. The school office staff will issue a bus pass if your student brings a signed and dated note from a parent/guardian with details of any change of plans.

Walking or Biking

If your child will be walking or biking home without an adult, please do a practice walk/ride both to and from school so that the child is familiar and comfortable with the route you have chosen and utilizes safe practices. When approaching the school, students should use designated crosswalks with staff personnel and Safety Patrol present. All bikes are to be walked in the carloop (north) parking lot, as there is heavy foot traffic during arrival and dismissal. Please make sure child wear's their helmet while riding their bike and keeps it secure on a bike rack at the bus loop or on the playground during the school day.

North Parking Lot (Carloop)

The north parking lot is at the front of the school building. Staff and visitors are free to park here during the school day. The south parking lot/bus loop is not available for parking, as there are frequent truck deliveries and bus dropoff. The northern edge of the parking lot is used as our "carloop" for car dropoff and pickup procedures before and after school. Please do not park in any of the spaces near the playground fence before 9:20am or after 3:15pm.

The carloop dropoff and pickup procedures are efficient and safe when all families and students use the following guidelines:

- Use the school bus or walk whenever possible to minimize level of congestion
- Never leave your vehicle at the curb, even for "a minute."
- Use the inside curb lane only for picking up or dropping off your children. Do not use the parking lot or allow your children to walk across the lot to find you.
- Children should enter/exit cars on the curbside for safety. They will be supported to do this independently or

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with staff support without you having to leave your vehicle.

- As you enter the lot, pull up as far as you can when dropping off or picking up your child.
- It helps to be ready! Please have backpacks ready, coats on, breakfast eaten BEFORE you enter the drop-off line so your child is ready to disembark when you stop at the curb.
- Please exercise patience. Sometimes mornings can be challenging for students (and parents).
- Refrain from cell phone use while operating your vehicle in the parking lot.
- If your child care provider or other family member will be dropping off or picking up your children, it is your responsibility to make sure that those designated persons are also familiar with these policies and routines.
- There are staff personnel present at pickup and drop off for any additional support that may be needed. Their primary responsibility is student safety.

Going Home with a Friend

We require a written note or email if you request a schedule change (e.g. riding a different bus, being picked up by someone else, walking home/riding a bus when not routine). This note must be dated and signed by the parent or guardian or come from your email account. In the absence of a note or email, we will proceed with your child's typical routine. For a change in routine, please do not rely on an email sent to a teacher during the teaching day. Teachers are often unable to check email until after students are dismissed at the end of the day. Please contact the office to be certain that we are aware of your request, especially if it is a same day change.

Transportation Department Contact Information

The Transportation Services department can be contacted at 206-236-3338 if you have specific questions about your bus route or transportation questions.

Health Services

Our school has a health room staffed by a nurse to care for ill or injured students. It is important for us to have up-to-date information about what you would like us to do in case of illness or emergency. Please be sure we have an updated emergency telephone number for you or a designated contact on file at all times.

Food Allergies

If your child has serious food allergies, please contact the school nurse about a plan for your child.

Health Information

Please keep us informed of any change in your child's health status and activity restriction.

Medication

We are unable to give any medication at school without a written request from a doctor or dentist. This ruling also applies to all over-the-counter medications including aspirin, vitamins, cough drops, throat lozenges, etc. Inhalers are categorized as medication and will require written permission and instructions. You will find all health forms [here](#).

Health Screening

Vision screening for near-sightedness and hearing screening are given at the school each year. Parents/guardians are advised if the results show a need for additional follow up. These are screening services only and do not take the place of regular examinations performed by your eye specialist or family physician.

Immunizations

Immunization information can be found [here](#).

Volunteering

Parents/guardians are the first teachers of their children. The public schools extend a cooperative and professional hand to foster life-long learning skills and interests. We welcome your involvement at school and your attention to the program at home. There are many ways we invite parents to participate.

West Mercer Elementary has a great tradition of volunteerism.

PTA

The Parent and Teacher Association is a vital part of West Mercer School. Your membership dues support school programs and your active involvement keeps you informed, as well as offering enrichment to the students. Many one-time and on-going activities need your help - if you can offer, please do!

Welcome Coffee

Volunteer opportunities abound at our “Welcome Coffee.” Held on the first day of Kindergarten (first day all students K-5 are present in the school), the coffee is a great place to meet other parents/guardians, see all of the volunteer opportunities available to you, and talk to others about what might work best for you.

Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers at MISD elementary schools are required to go through a [volunteer training process](#) found on our website. This volunteer training process must be completed every school year. Please submit any required documents to our front office secretary. All volunteer training documents and processes must be completed at least 48 hours prior to a prospective volunteer opportunity at the school.

Support Services

We are fortunate at West Mercer to have a broad range of support and specialists on staff to support in the education, development, and welfare of the entire student body.

Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS) Counseling Program

During a child’s elementary school years, important development is taking place physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally. At West Mercer, we recognize that difficulties or struggles in one area of development can often have negative impacts in other areas. To help navigate these issues, a full-time mental health counselor from Mercer Island Youth and Family Services is available to provide support services to students. The goal of our counseling program is to work with students, parents and school staff to encourage healthy development in each child. Our program is largely preventative; we try to provide services to children early in order to ensure a positive and successful school experience overall. Our counselor also facilitates age-appropriate classroom lessons, activities, and discussions about relationships, decision-making, problem-solving, and other issues related to physical, social, and emotional health.

The school counselor works with students individually as well as in groups at the request of parents, teachers, or the students themselves. There is no fee for counseling services provided within the schools though parent permission is required for ongoing work with individual students. Counseling services are confidential and information will not be

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shared without a signed release of information unless there is a safety issue that warrants disclosure. It should be noted that the counselor is available to all students and may have incidental or transient contact with your child through activities such as classroom presentations, informal lunch or recess groups to which students may be invited as guests, or to follow up on a playground or classroom issue. Such contacts are not considered individual counseling services and may not require parent permission.

Working together, we can help the child who is experiencing difficulty in adjusting to life's expectations. Feel free to contact the school counselor to share a concern regarding your child's development, request your child be considered for services, or to seek a referral to other community-based providers. If you notice a change in your child, find him or her approaching school differently than in the past, are experiencing stressful circumstances at home or within your family, you are encouraged to contact the school counselor, Anna Orton, at (206) 236-3438.

Multilingual Program (ML), formerly known as ELD

The first step in determining if students qualify for ML services is to ask parents/guardians during the registration process to complete a home language survey which identifies the child's primary language. Parents who indicate on the home language survey that their student has a primary language other than English will be assessed before starting school or within ten days of attendance using a Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA) test to determine eligibility for the ML program. The test covers listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Any student who scores a level one (beginning/advanced beginning), two (intermediate), or three (advanced) will be eligible for English language instruction in the program. Parents/guardians are notified soon after testing. Upon meeting with the parents/guardians after initial testing and gathering more information about the student, the ML coordinator will recommend appropriate placement. Please note that all eligible K-5 students are placed at their neighborhood schools and all ML students will attend regular class(es) while participating in the ML Program. You can read more about the [ML Program](#) on our website.

Primary Enrichment Program

The Primary Enrichment Program (PEP) is an enrichment program at West Mercer that offers appropriately leveled instruction in the classroom environment to K, 1, and 2 students. Students who qualify for this program remain in their general education classrooms. This program is separate from the Highly Capable Program and qualification for PEP does not guarantee qualification for the 3-8 Highly Capable Program.

Highly Capable Programming for 3rd-5th

West Mercer no longer offers "stand-alone" highly capable classes. However, if students qualify holistically for HC services, students may choose to stay at West Mercer and receive support at the appropriate instruction challenge level in their general education classroom. Students may also test and qualify for HC services in just math and/or reading, which is supported within the home school.

For more information about Mercer Island School District's HC testing, identification and selection process, please visit the [Highly Capable Services](#) webpage on the district website.

Special Education

Special Education services are available to students who qualify for specially designed instruction. The process for qualification and evaluation are very comprehensive. You can learn more about Special Services in MISD [here](#).

Learning Support Program (LSP)

West Mercer students benefit from additional support inside and outside of the classroom. State funded programs provide early intervention which is essential to the success of our students. The goal of the Learning Support Program (LSP) is to improve educational opportunities for students in reading fluency and reading comprehension. Students who may be emerging readers or still approaching grade level (not yet at standard) based on our school based assessments are identified by teachers and support staff as candidates for additional support through LSP. If your child is identified as needing support, our LSP teacher will contact you to provide more information and request your approval with beginning services. LSP small group sessions are offered outside of the general education classroom. The time and frequency of the small group depends on the level of support needed. Students who are pulled out for this instructional time do not miss core (tier 1) instruction in their classrooms.

Occupational Therapist

West Mercer has an Occupational Therapist for students who qualify for help with daily living functions to support well-being. OT's use self-care, work, and play activities to increase independent function, enhance development, and prevent disability. In the school setting, this means helping students with their main occupation, being students.

Speech Therapist

Also known as a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), this professional is available to provide individual speech and language therapy for students who have difficulty pronouncing some speech sounds and/or correctly putting words together into sentences. Parents who are concerned about their child's speech, language, or hearing should contact their child's teacher. SLP services fall within the scope of special services and students must qualify via evaluation in order to receive speech services. (If your family has conducted an outside evaluation, please contact and share this information with our School Psychologist.)

School Psychologist

School psychologists are assigned to all elementary schools within the district. They work cooperatively with the special education team and classroom teachers, as a primary function of their role in the school community is to review student needs and data as part of the Building Guidance Team in order to determine to evaluation for special services. Our School Psychologist is also responsible for building and overseeing 504 plans. If you have any questions regarding special services, 504s, or process for evaluation/assessment for services, please contact our School Psychologist.

Student Success Coach (SSC)

We have added a new role to our school community this school year. We have a full-time "Student Success Coach" whose role is to work with students throughout the school who may need more social-emotional learning/behavior supports. Students do not need to qualify for special education services to receive support from our SSC. Our SSC will provide supports such as goal setting with students, daily check-ins, collaboration around community building with the classroom teacher, recess supports, and lunch groups. As we continue to develop this role, we will be responsive to the needs of the West Mercer students and community.

Instruction and Assessment

Curriculum

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K-5 Math Curriculum: i-ready

K-5 Reading Curriculum: Benchmark

All [Elementary Curriculum](#) information can be found on our website.

Curriculum/Community Night

In the fall of each school year, West Mercer holds “Curriculum & Community Night.” Families are invited to attend their child’s classroom to learn more about the classroom and school community, as well as curriculum for the year, their teaching philosophy, operational guidelines and policies, etc. While it is not a time for individual family conferences, there is time for questions and connections with the teacher and other families. Attending Curriculum/Community Night will give you a great sense of what to expect in your child’s classroom for the year. You will also have the opportunity to sign up for volunteer opportunities in the school and your child’s classroom. Night.

Assessment

State mandated assessments include:

- 3rd grade: Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and Math Assessments.
- 4th grade: Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and Math Assessments.
- 5th grade: Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and Math Assessments.
- 5th grade: Measure of Student Progress Science

For more information on state testing, please visit [OSPI - State Testing](#).

Placement

A great deal of effort goes into the process of student placement.

Families will have access to your student’s placement via Qmlativ at the end of August. *Please note that you must complete the District RSVP process to gain access to your child’s placement in Qmlativ.* Since we understand how unsettling it can be waiting to find out who your child’s teacher will be next year, it is important that you understand the process that we have gone through to place your child in their class. This process starts at the end of the previous school year, and we can honestly say that each child, each class, each mixture of children, all special programs, etc. were carefully scrutinized for a proper balance.

Thank you for understanding the placement process and speaking positively with your child regarding their placement to help them understand that our staff has worked hard to ensure a positive school experience for everyone. All our teachers are looking forward to meeting their new students and creating nurturing, accepting, positive classroom environments.

Kindergarten Placement Process

This first week for Kindergarteners (8/28-8/30) is dubbed “K Camp” because students will be in mixed groups, rotations, and classrooms, with the opportunity to learn with all three of our Kindergarten teachers at different points.

The K Camp week provides the opportunity for our Kindergarten teachers to get to know all students and to build the Kindergarten community holistically. It also gives our teachers the opportunity to better understand student needs and dynamics for eventual placement. While we do have three unique classrooms once we place students, our Kindergarten teachers/classrooms partner closely together throughout the school year, and it is important for

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our students to see themselves as part of a whole Kindergarten cohort community as well. Following the K Camp week of learning as a whole community, our teachers will place students in three separate classrooms on Friday, August 30th.

The following week, Kindergartners will not have school on September 3rd, 4th, and 5th due to WAKids Conferences. During the WAKids conference window, your family will sign up for a 20-minute conference block with your child's homeroom teacher. You only need to attend one conference over this period. School will resume for Kindergarten on Friday, September 6th.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are given each trimester (November, March and June). They are distributed via Qmlativ (Skyward.)

Teacher Conferences

The parent/guardian of each child will have one formal parent/teacher conference scheduled in the fall. If you want to discuss your child's school work or progress at any other time, please schedule an appointment in advance with your child's teacher. This allows your child's teacher adequate time to prepare for a meaningful exchange of information. "Drop-in" conferences tend to be non-productive and take away valuable learning time from all students.

Technology

Please visit [this link](#) to learn more about our Elementary Instructional Technology resources.

School Expectations

Classroom Preparedness

Students are expected to make choices in preparation for their day, and we believe they can take responsibility for these choices. Preparation for the day includes supplies, homework, lunch, musical instruments, and appropriate clothing.

Dress

Dress for the school day should reflect good choices. We ask that students dress for safety, comfort, weather conditions, etc. If clothing is substantially distracting to the student themselves or to others within the school environment, it is inappropriate. Clothing that promotes or contains references to alcohol, drugs, or tobacco use, or poses a serious threat to school safety through pictures, messages, innuendo, or slogans—is prohibited. Please help your child with these choices for their own well-being. Please label all items of clothing with your child's first and last name.

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices and Headphones

This school year, our secondary level (6th-12th grade) is rolling out the "[MI Phone-Free Schools](#)" Initiative. Though not a change, we are also committed to phone-free schools in our elementary schools. Electronic toys, music listening devices, and texting/phone call-capable devices—including (but not limited to): cell phones, non-school ipads, smart watches with texting or phone call capabilities - are not to be used on school grounds. We have plenty of phones throughout our building should we need to get in

touch with you. If you would like to share changes to plans (i.e. pickup, etc.) with your child during the school day, please call the front office and the message will be relayed to your child's classroom teacher.

Similar to the "MI Phone-Free Schools," consequences for violations for violating the no-cell phone/electronic devices policy at West Mercer is as follows:

- **First offense** - Teachers or staff will provide a warning reminder to the student. The student will be asked to silence or turn off the device and put the device in their backpack, so that it is out of sight and reach.
- **Second offense*** - Teachers or staff will immediately confiscate the device(s), and bring them to the school's main office to be stored securely. The device will only be returned to a parent or guardian, who will be notified that they need to come to the school office to pick up the device.

Special Note: West Mercer dismisses at 3:45pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 2:05pm on Wednesday. School office and administrative staff **will not wait after school** for a parent to pick up a confiscated device.

*Further offenses will be handled on a case by case basis which could include future disciplinary action.

Toys or other valuables at school

Toys at school can be lost, broken and, above all, a major distraction to learning and supervision. Accordingly, personal toys, sports equipment, electronic games, and other like play items should remain at home. Exceptions may be made by classroom teachers for one-time special projects/presentations and for therapeutic uses mutually agreed upon by staff, parents/guardians, medical personnel and 504/special education teams.

Money, valuable jewelry, sporting goods, cameras, radios, video games, etc are not to be brought to school. Personal items of any kind are brought without permission are at the student's own risk.

Food/Gum/Beverage

We appreciate clean hallways, classrooms, and classroom equipment. Students are expected to be responsible for making appropriate use of trash cans and drinking fountains. Gum chewing is not permitted at the school.

Student Behavior and Student Discipline

Student behavior is complex because it stems from a need shaped by individual stories, identities, and life experiences. When behavior violates norms, rules, or expectations - especially when others are impacted by the behavior - the circumstance grows increasingly more emotionally charged for the students involved and their guardians or parents. We know students are not defined by their behavior and there is a need being communicated within a behavioral event. However, when impact or harm is caused, there is a need to respond to that impact through various disciplinary approaches. In our schools, behavior is tied to both learning needs and disciplinary actions. The links to our schools below describe the way we approach discipline and respond to behavior in our schools.

[General Overview of Elementary Response to Behavior](#)

At West Mercer, we are implementing an aligned response to minor student behaviors within the classroom this year, which can be viewed [here](#). This is the process that all classroom teachers will be

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utilizing when addressing minor behaviors. We have also done work as a staff in the past three years to build out a [“Response to Behavior” discrepancy table](#) reference tool that distinguishes minor vs. major behaviors.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) of Students Prohibited

Promoting safe and healthy learning environments is a core value of the District. Schools are meant to be safe and inclusive environments where all students are protected from Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB), including in the classroom, on the school bus, in school sports, and during other school activities.

What is HIB?

District [Policy 3207](#) and its associated [procedures, 3207P](#), defines HIB as any electronic, written, verbal, or physical intentional act of a student that physically harms a student or damages their property, severely interferes with education, or fosters an intimidating or threatening educational environment for students. Often, though not always, HIB incidents involve an observed or perceived power imbalance and are repeated multiple times or are highly likely to be repeated HIB is not allowed, by law, in our schools.

Reporting HIB:

If you feel your child has experienced or observed a HIB, please speak up as soon as possible so we can begin to address it but in no event later than one year. We encourage our students to do the same. All school staff are committed to preventing and addressing HIB so feel free to raise your concerns with whoever you feel most comfortable, be it an administrator, teacher, paraeducator, nurse, counselor, etc.

Reports about HIB can be made in writing or verbally. You may use our District’s [HIB Reporting Form \(3207F\)](#). This form should be submitted to an administrator, HIB compliance officer, or a trusted adult staff member. The HIB reporting form is designed to help you think and write down the key information the school will need to look into your concerns.

Your report can be made anonymously, if you are uncomfortable revealing your identity, or confidentially if you prefer it not be shared with other students involved with the report.

Reports can be made anonymously 24/7, 365 days a year using [Say Something Anonymous Reporting System](#) accessible via an App installed on District-provided student devices, online via web-browser, and by phone (**1-844-5-SayNow**).

No disciplinary action will be taken against another student based **solely** on an anonymous or confidential report.

Submit the complaint as soon as possible for a prompt investigation, and within one year of the conduct or incident.

Staff Handling of HIB:

If a staff member is notified of, observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses HIB, they must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the HIB behavior and to prevent it from happening again. Our District has a [HIB Compliance Officer](#) - Erin Battersby, Executive Director (206.230.6227 & erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org) - who supports prevention and response to HIB.

What happens after I make a report about HIB?

If you report HIB, school staff must attempt to resolve the concerns. If the concerns are resolved, then no further action may be necessary. However, if you feel that you or someone you know is the victim of unresolved, severe, or persistent HIB that requires further investigation and action, then you should request an official HIB investigation.

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Under [District Policy](#), retaliation against those who report HIB is strictly prohibited. Our staff are committed to enforcing this Policy and taking actions designed to protect reporters from retaliation.

What is the investigation process?

When you submit a complaint, either the administrator leading the investigation or our HIB Compliance Officer will promptly notify the families of all students involved and initiate a thorough investigation. This process is typically completed within five school days, unless you agree to or circumstances necessitate a different timeline, in which case we will communicate with you to set a mutually agreeable deadline. If the complexity of a HIB requires extended time, you will be kept informed of the anticipated completion date.

Upon concluding the investigation, the responsible administrator or the HIB Compliance Officer will, within two days, inform the person who reported the incident about the outcomes. The response from the district will include:

- A summary of the investigation findings,
- A determination of whether the allegations of HIB were substantiated,
- Any necessary corrective measures or remedies, and
- Detailed information on how to appeal the decision, should you find it necessary.

This process, which is outlined in greater detail in [Policy 3207P](#), ensures that each case is handled with the seriousness it deserves and keeps you informed every step of the way.

What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?

For the student designated as the “targeted student” in a complaint:

If you do not agree with the school district’s decision, you may appeal the decision and include any additional information regarding the complaint to the Superintendent, or the person assigned to lead the appeal, and then to the school board.

For the student designated as the “aggressor” in a complaint:

A student found to be an “aggressor” in a HIB complaint may not appeal the decision of a HIB investigation. They can, however, appeal corrective actions that result from the findings of the HIB investigation.

For more information about the HIB complaint process, including important timelines, please review the District’s policies and [HIB webpage](#) or the District’s [Prohibition of HIB Policy 3207](#) and implementing procedure, [3207P](#),

We Stand Against Discrimination in All Forms

Our District upholds the principle that all students, staff, and community members have the right to a safe and equitable environment. Discrimination, which includes any unfair treatment based on membership in a protected class, is strictly prohibited under [Policy 3210](#). Protected classes include race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability, use of a service animal, veteran, or military status. We are committed to promoting inclusivity and taking decisive actions against discrimination within our educational community.

What is discriminatory harassment?

Discriminatory harassment includes behaviors like teasing, name-calling, threatening physical harm, or other actions that may be harmful or humiliating. This type of harassment creates a hostile environment when it is so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it interferes with or limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school.

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What happens after I file a discrimination complaint?

If you file a discrimination complaint, a school administrator will discuss your concerns with you directly to understand and address the situation effectively. Complaints can be addressed informally at the building level or formally through the District's Civil Rights Compliance Officer or designee. Discrimination complaints can be handled informally, meaning at the building level, or formally with the District's Civil Rights Compliance Officer or designee. At any time, a complainant can request that their complaint be handled formally.

Regardless of how a discrimination complaint is handled, you will receive a copy of the District's discrimination complaint [procedure](#) which outlines the process, timelines, and appeal process.

To review the district's Nondiscrimination [Policy 3210](#) and Procedure [3210P](#), visit our [Website](#) and navigate to our Non-Discrimination Resources.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome conduct or communication of a sexual nature that substantially disrupts a student's education or creates an intimidating, hostile environment. This could involve pressuring someone for sexual favors, unwanted physical or sexual contact, rumors, sexually explicit materials, or sexual assault or rape. Like other forms of harassment, sexual harassment is not tolerated under any circumstances.

Our schools do not discriminate based on sex and prohibit sex discrimination in all of our education programs and employment, as required by Title IX and state law.

To review the District's Sexual Harassment [Policy 3205](#) and [Procedure 3205P](#).

What should my school do about discriminatory and sexual harassment?

When a school becomes aware of possible discriminatory or sexual harassment, an administrator or designee must promptly investigate the matter and take effective steps to stop the harassment, remedy its effects, and prevent its recurrence.

What can I do if I'm concerned about discrimination or harassment?

Raise your concerns with a school staff member, administrator, or coordinator as soon as possible so that the concerning behavior can be promptly addressed. You can always submit a written complaint to a school principal.

You may also contact the following people who are designated points of contact to whom you may report your concerns, ask questions, or learn more about how to resolve your concerns.

- ***Harassment, Hazing, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB):***
HIB Compliance Officer: Erin Battersby, Executive Director (206.230.6227 & erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)
- ***Discrimination:***
Civil Rights Coordinator: Erin Battersby, Executive Director (206.230.6227 & erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)
- ***Sexual harassment/Discrimination:***
Title IX Coordinator: Erin Battersby, Executive Director (206.230.6227 & erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)
- ***Disability Discrimination:***
Section 504 Coordinator: Melissa Robertson, Director (206.236.3329 & melissa.robertson@mercerislandschools.org)

- ***Gender Identity Discrimination:***
Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator: Erin Battersby, Executive Director (206.230.6227 & erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)

What happens after I file a discrimination complaint?

If you file a discrimination complaint, a school administrator will discuss your concerns with you directly to understand and address the situation effectively. Complaints can be addressed informally at the building level or formally through the District’s Civil Rights Compliance Officer or designee. At any time, a complainant can request that their complaint be handled formally.

An investigation into discrimination must be completed within 30 calendar days unless you agree to a different timeline. If your complaint involves exceptional circumstances that require a longer investigation, you will be notified in writing with the anticipated date for a response.

When a formal investigation is complete, the school Superintendent or the staff member leading the investigation will send you a written response. This response will include:

- A summary of the results of the investigation
- A determination of whether the school district failed to comply with civil rights laws
- Any corrective measures or remedies needed
- Notice about how you can appeal the decision

Regardless of how a discrimination complaint is handled, you will receive a copy of the District’s discrimination complaint [procedure](#) which outlines the process, timelines, and appeal process.

What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to appeal. The administrator who handled your case will provide information on how to proceed with an appeal. This could be to the School Board. Once the School Board renders a decision on appeal, you can further appeal that decision to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

More information about this process, including important timelines, is included in the District’s Nondiscrimination Procedure ([3210P](#)) and Sexual Harassment Procedure ([3205P](#)).

I already submitted an HIB complaint – what will my school do?

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) can also be discrimination if it's related to a protected class. If you give your school a written report of HIB that involves discrimination or sexual harassment, your school will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator. The school district will investigate the complaint using both the Nondiscrimination Procedure ([3210P](#)) and the HIB Procedure ([3207P](#)) so as to address all aspects of your complaint.

Our Schools are Gender-Inclusive

In Washington, all students have the right to be treated consistent with their gender identity at school. Our school will:

- Address students by their requested name and pronouns, with or without a legal name change
- Change a student’s gender designation and have their gender accurately reflected in school records
- Allow students to use restrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity
- Allow students to participate in sports, physical education courses, field trips, and overnight trips in accordance with their gender identity
- Keep health and education information confidential and private

- Allow students to wear clothing that reflects their gender identity and apply dress codes without regard to a student's gender or perceived gender
- Protect students from teasing, bullying, or harassment based on their gender or gender identity

Please follow the following links to access the District's Gender-Inclusive Schools Policy [3211](#) and procedure, [3211P](#). If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator, Erin Battersby, at 206.230.6227 or erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org.

Who else can help with HIB or Discrimination Concerns?

- *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)*
All reports must start locally at the school or district level. However, OSPI can assist students, families, communities, and school staff with questions about state law, the HIB complaint process, and the discrimination and sexual harassment complaint processes.

OSPI School Safety Center (For questions about harassment, intimidation, and bullying)

- Website: ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/school-safety-center
- Email: schoolsafety@k12.wa.us
- Phone: 360-725-6068

- *OSPI Equity and Civil Rights Office* (For questions about discrimination and sexual harassment)

- Website: ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights
- Email: equity@k12.wa.us
- Phone: 360-725-6162

- *Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)*

The Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds works with families, communities, and schools to address problems together so every student can fully participate and thrive in Washington's K- 12 public schools. OEO provides informal conflict resolution tools, coaching, facilitation, and training about family, community engagement, and systems advocacy.

- Website: www.oeo.wa.gov
- Email: oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov
- Phone: 1-866-297-2597

- *U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR)*

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal nondiscrimination laws in public schools, including those that prohibit discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, and age. OCR also has a discrimination complaint process.

- Website: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>
- Email: orc@ed.gov
- Phone: 800-421-3481

School Safety

The safety of our students and staff is of primary concern. The building and grounds are inspected and monitored consistently for repair needs and safe conditions.

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Building Accessibility

The outside door to the office vestibule is the only accessible door during school hours. Once a visitor arrives in the vestibule area, there are two large locked doors that allow entry to our hallways. You must sign-in and check-in with the main office before being granted any access to move within the building. All other exterior access doors are locked and non-accessible by volunteers or visitors during the school day. Teachers are required to keep all exterior doors closed when not actively in use (upon entry/exit to and from recess, etc.).

Visitors

We require all visitors (parent and community) to come to the office when visiting or volunteering at school. Because safety and security is of the utmost importance at the school, it is important that we know who is in the building at all times. Please check in at the Main Office and obtain a badge. It is required that you wear your sticker badge while in the school building or on campus during normal school hours. You will need your Driver's License/Identification Card to check-in at the office. Only pre-arranged volunteers or parents with appointments should go to the classrooms. No children may be left unattended in the office while parents are in meetings or other activities at the school. Please do not bring siblings to wait in the office or accompany you while volunteering. You must find alternative childcare arrangements for meetings and activities.

MIPD on Campus

MISD has a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) that works with all of our schools. This officer's focus at the elementary level is on community outreach and relationship building. They are available in case of an emergency, but the time they primarily spend on our elementary campus is connecting with students. MIPD has also committed to building a more positive presence on our school campuses and has spent time before and after school greeting and meeting students and families. If you see an officer's police car in our parking lot, it does not indicate there is an emergency taking place. Police cars are often present for the purpose of community outreach in our building.

Safety Drills

We are required by OSPI to conduct one safety drill per month. We do not utilize any scenario-type of safety drills. All of our drills are conducted with student emotional health and wellness in mind and communicated calmly. The types of safety drills we are required to conduct include fire, earthquake, shelter in place, and lockdown. Our transportation team also conducts a bus safety drill one time per year. We do not want to have to respond to an actual emergency, but we must be prepared for one in any case.

Emergency School Closure

It is the policy of the Mercer Island School District to hold school whenever possible. However, there may be days when school must be closed or start later than usual due to weather or emergency conditions. Communications about emergency school closure are sent through a variety of platforms. You will need to make sure your correct contact information is on file. You can find more information about emergencies and school closure information [here](#).

Emergency Procedures

During any Emergency Procedure, we ask that telephone inquiries be made to the Mercer Island School District Emergency number at 206-236-3366. The comfort, safety, and preparedness of our West Mercer School community are our greatest priorities.

Parents/guardians should know:

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- The school holds monthly drills.
- The school interfaces with Fire, Police, and City of Mercer Island personnel as needed.
- The school has a container with emergency supplies that provide for at least 48 hours of student and staff needs, as well as emergency backpacks with supplies in every classroom.
- The school has a Site Safety Team that meets monthly to review and adapt to safety needs within the school building.

West Mercer Activities and Enrichment Clubs

Art Docent

Art Docents are parent/guardian volunteers who visit classrooms to give an art lesson. Usually, the art docent will select a theme, such as a genre of art (impressionism, abstract art, etc.) or theme (children in paintings, dogs in art, etc.) The class discusses the artwork and then completes an art project exploring the theme.

Assemblies

West Mercer is lucky to have great assemblies each year that tie into the curriculum or citizenship focus of the school. Some assemblies are for the entire student body, while others are for specific grade levels.

Band

Fifth grade students are invited to register and participate in Band or Orchestra twice weekly before school at Islander Middle School or Mercer Island High School. Specific information comes home with 4th graders in the spring of each year.

Birthday Celebrations

If you wish to send a birthday treat to school, please schedule it in advance with your child's teacher and be conscious of our school's healthy snack efforts and potential allergy issues. Balloons, flowers and birthday surprises are disruptive in the school setting, so please save them for home. If your student has a birthday party planned outside of school, please deliver invitations through the U.S. mail—not receiving an invitation can make other children feel left out, and teachers are asked not to support or facilitate their distribution in class.

Field Day

Each spring, during a designated school day, the entire student body participates in outdoor athletic activities to celebrate fitness and spring.

Field Trips

The PTA enrichment budget provides funds to classrooms for field trips throughout the year. All field trips are directly related to the current curriculum. Your teacher will provide information regarding specific field trips either by backpack mail, email, or both.

Fine Arts Showcase

The district-wide Fine Arts Showcase is a not-to-be-missed art extravaganza at the high school. All elementary students will have an art piece on display.

Artwork is displayed from elementary through high school, and all of our school music programs perform over the course of this two-day event held in the spring of each year.

Welcome Coffee/Volunteer Sign Up

This event is held on the first day of Kindergarten, which is when all K-5 students are at school. Parents/guardians can connect with one another and the school administration, learn about our PTA, and how to get involved. This event offers an opportunity to learn about volunteer opportunities at school and how to sign up.

Parent/Guardian Education Events

Regular parent education events are scheduled throughout the school year on a broad range of topics. These events are often hosted by PTA or ParentEdge in partnership with the school.

PTA Meetings

The PTA holds regular general membership meetings that are open to everyone. We count on you to help shape our programs for the year. A meeting calendar is published at the beginning of the year. The meeting schedule can be found on the PTA website.

School Pictures

Each fall, arrangements are made for a photographer to take individual pictures of students for the student records. As a service to the parents, these pictures may be purchased on a prepaid basis.

Yearbook

West Mercer PTA puts out a yearbook at the end of the year which provides wonderful memories of classmates, teachers, and activities. Information about purchasing the yearbook can be found within the PTA newsletters, usually within the winter trimester.

5th Grade Events

In their final year of elementary school, West Mercer 5th graders enjoy several unique events and activities.

Outdoor Education Experience: Fifth-grade students at West Mercer Elementary have the opportunity to participate in an outdoor education experience. This is designed to educate and inspire environmental and community stewardship with a focus on science and sustainability. The curriculum ties into our state science and social studies standards. This experience usually occurs in the spring, depending on availability of the provider.

Fifth Grade Activity: This culminating event held at the end of the school year celebrates the culmination of the elementary school experience. The scope and type of event will change from year to year, with the objective being to give students a unique and memorable experience. The event is held towards the end of the year.

Sweatshirt Signing: The PTAs create sweatshirts each year that list all 5th graders across the district. The tradition of having sweatshirts with all of the names of the 5th graders in the district has come to mean a great deal to students.

Middle School Transition Day – Gator for a Night: A very special opportunity for 5th graders to spend some time at Islander Middle School for orientation.

Enrichment Clubs

These PTA-funded clubs provide an opportunity for students to engage in new learning and build

social connections beyond their classrooms. These clubs are offered both within and beyond the school day, some offered to particular grade levels, and at various times in the year depending on the club. Information about enrichment clubs is usually sent out by the club advisor(s) in early fall.

Enrichment clubs for the 2024-2025 school year include: Musical, Mallets, Peer Mediators, Leadership Ambassadors, Circle Up, Learning Lab (Lunch Homework Club), Reading/Math Tutoring Support, Student Council, Safety Patrol, and Green Team.

More information about enrichment clubs will come out as the year begins.

Mercer Island Community Resources

Community Resources

Mercer Island Parks and Recreation

You can reach MI Parks & Rec at 206-236-3545 or visit their website at [MI Parks & Rec](#).

Youth and Family Services

Another department of the City, Youth and Family Services is located in Luther Burbank Park. MIYFS provides family and community services to the MI community through collaboration with many groups, including the Mercer Island School District. They can be reached at 206-236-3525 or by visiting their website here [MIYFS](#).

Mercer Island Library

Our local library, located at 4400 88th Ave SE, is part of the King County Library System. This local branch has an extensive youth section serving elementary students and even has a “teen area” for kids to do homework after school. Providing more than just great books, our library also sponsors a full calendar of activities for children and adults. See their website [MI Library](#) for the calendar, library hours and additional information or reach them by phone at 206-236-3537.

Boys and Girls Club

The Mercer Island Boys and Girls Club of King County is a non-profit organization serving children ages 6 – 18 with a broad range of programs from arts and sports, to career development with a concentration on themes of citizenship and leadership. It’s great to be on their email list, as they send reminders of sign-up periods and other notifications. You can contact the MI Boys and Girls Club at 206.232.4548 or visit their website [MI Boys & Girls Club](#)

Mercer Island Swimming Pool (formerly Mary Wayte)

Operated by Northwest Center Pools, the Mercer Island Pool offers public swim and family swim time for a nominal fee. Check their schedule by calling 206.296.4370 or visit their website [MI Pool](#)