

# West Woods School

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## Family Handbook



**2025-2026**

### **HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION**

In Hamden Public Schools, we are deeply committed to providing high-quality, equitable, and ambitious instruction for each and every Hamden Public School student so that they not only learn, but excel. Our schools foster an inclusive environment where every student, regardless of their identity, is empowered to learn, thrive, and achieve their fullest potential. We are a community that celebrates diversity as a source of strength, inspiration, and knowledge.

### **HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT**

Hamden Public Schools mission is to ensure students have a strong sense of identity, purpose and agency, so that they leave our system as continuous learners who act with purpose to achieve the conditions they desire in their own and others' lives. Each and every student...a continuous learner, career and community ready!

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## **Preface**

The material covered within this handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subjected to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

This Family Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Any changes in policy that affect portions of this handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages and other communications.

## Message from the Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I would like to welcome you to the "Woods"! Please accept this Family Handbook as a summary of important information that will assist you in getting the most out of your child's experience at West Woods School.

Our mission is to ensure all our students learn to the best of their potential each and every day they are entrusted to our care and our staff is committed to serving the educational needs of your child.

At West Woods School, your child will be a part of the "PACK", our positive behavioral support system, where we will teach and reinforce expected socially appropriate school behaviors that will transfer to the outside world. Students will be encouraged to always be:

**P**: Positive and Respectful

**A**: Act Responsibly

**C**: Care for Others

**K**: Keep Safe



In addition, we use restorative practices when appropriate to help students learn from mistakes, hold students accountable for their actions, and repair the harm that was caused. Traditional forms of discipline and consequences will be used in accordance with Board of Education policy.

We encourage parent involvement as we appreciate that you are important partners in the education of your child. Please keep in close contact with your child's teachers and with me so that we may best support your child. You are always welcome to contact me at (203) 407-2054 or [dlevy@hamden.org](mailto:dlevy@hamden.org).

West Woods School is a wonderful learning community and I feel privileged to be a part of it.

Best wishes for a wonderful and successful school year.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Daniel M. Levy



Daniel M. Levy

## Hamden Public Schools

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Superintendent                                  | Gary Highsmith    |
| Assistant Superintendent                        | Erin Bailey       |
| Chief Operating Officer                         | Tom Ariola        |
| Athletic Director                               | Tom Dyer          |
| Director of Adult Education and Pre-K           | Nadine Gannon     |
| Director of Fine Arts                           | Leslie Dellavalle |
| Director of Language Arts                       | Heather Wachter   |
| Director of Math                                | Terri Kurczewski  |
| Director of Media, Assessment, and Intervention | Sue Smey          |
| Director of Pupil Personnel Services            | Mike McDermott    |
| Director of Science                             | Sarah Sandora     |
| Director of World Language                      | Elizabeth Lapman  |
| Coordinator of Alternative Programming          | TBD               |
| Coordinator of Counseling and Career Pathways   | Brooke Stanziale  |
| Coordinator of Pre-K Education                  | Jessica Vega      |
| Coordinator of Elementary Special Education     | Asia Thompson     |

## West Woods School

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Principal                              | Dan Levy       |
| PTA President                          | Nicole Kavalan |
| School Governance Equity Council Chair | TBD            |

### Who to contact if you need assistance with...

**Academic supports (Regular education ):** Kristen Pierson.

**Literacy curriculum :** Anna Blanchard (ablanchard@hamden.org).

**Math curriculum :** Renee Pietrosimone (rpietrosimone@hamden.org).

**To request supports for your child due to a disability:** Dan Levy (dlevy@hamden.org)

**To request a PPT meeting for Special Education services:** Jenn Wolcott (jwolcott@hamden.org).

**To discuss your child's social or emotional well-being:** Marissa Brown (marbrown@hamden.org).

**If you have a question about food service or charges,** Lyana Earley, General Manager Whitsons (earleyl@whitsons.com).

### Important Phone Numbers

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Hamden Public Schools     | (203) 407-2000 |
| WWS Main Office           | (203) 407-2050 |
| WWS Fax                   | (203) 407-5863 |
| WWS Nurse                 | (203) 407-3108 |
| First Student Bus Company | (203) 288-2887 |
| HPS Transportation Office | (203) 407-2423 |

When school is not in session (before or after school, weekends, holidays or vacations) messages can be left by calling the main number and following the instructions to access the appropriate voicemail box. The appropriate person will get back to you as soon as possible. We hope this service will make it easier for parents to communicate with us.

### Important Links

**Hamden Public Schools:** <https://www.hamden.org/>

**WWS:** <https://www.hamden.org/westwoods>

**WWS PTA:** <https://sites.google.com/westwoodspta.org/home>

**WW School Governance Equity Council:** <https://www.hamden.org/westwoods/school-governance>

**HPS Calendar:** <https://www.hamden.org/district-information/district-calendar>

**Lunch Menus:** <https://www.hamden.org/district-information/lunchmenu>

**Community Resources:** <https://www.hamden.org/resources/community>



## WWS Staff

| Principal                           | Art                                  | Secretary                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dan Levy                            | Sarah Bratchell                      | Amy Marena                     |
| Pre-Kindergarten                    | Multi-Lingual Learner Specialist     | Nurse                          |
| Bethany Charles                     | Tricia Ciaburri                      | Delores Deer                   |
| Amy Kang                            | Instrumental Music                   | Custodians                     |
| Kindergarten                        | Julie Fallon and Melissa Ferranti    | Dan Griggs<br>(Head Custodian) |
| Kelly Casale                        | Library/Media Specialist             | Mark Ward                      |
| Karyn Errico                        | Laura Vaida                          | Paraprofessionals              |
| Laura Perretta                      | Literacy Specialist                  | Amy Balisciano                 |
| First Grade                         | Anna Blanchard                       | AnneMarie Cooper               |
| Kathy Clark                         | Math Specialist                      | Shawn Elder                    |
| Carolyn Longyear                    | Renee Pietrosimone                   | Lisa Hernandez                 |
| Second Grade                        | Music                                | Cindi Kiwanis                  |
| Megan Clifford                      | Art Sousa                            | Loretta Lincoln                |
| Kathy Tran                          | Physical Education                   | Emma Miller                    |
| Third Grade                         | Alan Page                            | Jena Rosa                      |
| Jessica Essenter                    | Psychologist                         | Janet Rowe                     |
| Shana Gaither                       | Jenn Wolcott                         | Joanne Shultz                  |
| Fourth Grade                        | Resource Teachers                    | Jadora Snowden                 |
| Monica Gagliardi                    | Martha Donovan                       |                                |
| Heather Page                        | Courtney Flowers                     |                                |
| Elizabeth Reilly                    | Amanda Knecht                        |                                |
| Fifth Grade                         | Social Worker                        |                                |
| Kristen Bell                        | Marissa Brown                        | Lunch and Recess Aides         |
| Alyson Fedak                        | Speech and Language Pathologist      | Traci Capasso                  |
| Sixth Grade                         | Rachel Korwek                        | Julianne Cortes                |
| Raechel Grabarz                     | Diane Mital                          | Krystal Darby                  |
| Lauren Mollin                       | SRBI Coordinator                     | Tomona Sato                    |
| Cathy Slattery                      | Kristen Pierson                      | Jennifer Wieland               |
| Instructional Intervention Teachers | Whitson's (café)                     |                                |
| Lisa Goodrich                       | Anna Marie DeStefano<br>(Supervisor) |                                |
| Mackenzie McDermott                 | Tutors                               |                                |
| Tim Skomro                          | Lauren Piscitelle                    |                                |
| Building Substitute Teacher         | Paula Robinson                       |                                |
| Dana Cobbs                          | Diana Sanders                        |                                |
| Sue Sosna                           | Laurie Whalen-King                   |                                |

## Calendar

| August  | January   |
|---|---|
| 25: First day of school   | 1-5: No School—New Year's Day/<br>Holiday Recess  |
| September   | 6: No School—Three Kings Day  |
| 1: No School—Labor Day  | 19: No School—Dr. Martin Luther<br>King, Jr. Day  |
| 18: WWS Open House  | 26: Early Dismissal—Professional De-<br>velopment   |
| 22: Early Dismissal —Professional<br>Development                    | February  |
| 23: No School—Rosh Hashanah   | 9: Early Dismissal —Professional De-<br>velopment   |
| October   | 16: No School—President's Day   |
| 2: No School—Yom Kippur   | March   |
| 13: No School—Indigenous Peo-<br>ple's Day                          | 20: No School—Eid al-Fitr   |
| 22: Early Dismissal—Elementary<br>Evening Conferences               | 24: Early Dismissal—Elementary Even-<br>ing Conferences   |
| 23: Early Dismissal—Elementary<br>Afternoon and Evening Conferences | 25: Early Dismissal—Elementary After-<br>noon and Evening Conferences   |
| 31: Early Dismissal—Professional<br>Development                     | April   |
| November  | 3: No School—Good Friday  |
| 3: No School—Professional Devel-<br>opment                          | 6: Early Dismissal —Professional De-<br>velopment   |
| 4: No School—Election Day/<br>Professional Development              | 9: Elementary report cards available  |
| 27-29: No School—Thanksgiving<br>Recess.                            | 13-17: No School—Spring Recess  |
| December  | May   |
| 16: Elementary report cards availa-<br>ble                          | 25: No School—Memorial Day.   |
| 23: Early Dismissal   | June  |
| 24-31: No School—Holiday Recess                                     | 11: Early Dismissal—Last Day of<br>School (tentative). Elementary Report<br>Cards will be distributed on the last<br>day of school. |
|   | 19: No School will be scheduled—<br>Juneteenth  |

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## Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents to ensure their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to a legitimate absence.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at the school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. Absence means an excused absence, unexcused absence, or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion is always considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school district offices. A student must remain in school until age 18, unless s/he graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent child." The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. If a student is going to be absent, parents must email the main office at amaren-na@hamden.org by 9:00 AM. Parents may also leave a voicemail at (203) 407-2050 to report an absence with the student's name, teacher's name, reason for absence, and the name of the person calling. Parents can also leave a message on the attendance line at any point when school is not open.

The responsibility for makeup of work lies with the student, not the teacher. Unless a student has an extended illness, all makeup privileges must be completed within 5 days after the student returns to school.

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been

submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

## The Two-level Approach to Excused Absences

The State Board of Education definitions establish two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an excused absence (see table below).

| Level | Total # of Days Absent* | Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused   | Documentation Required within 10 Days  |
|-------|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1     | One through nine        | Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.  | Parent or guardian note only.  |
| 2     | 10 and above            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student illness (<i>Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length.</i>)</li><li>• Student's observance of a religious holiday.</li><li>• Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.</li><li>• Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required).</li><li>• The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason).</li><li>• Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (Opportunities must meet certain criteria. See below for details).</li></ul> | Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason). |

\* Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

Children of active duty service members receive an additional 10 days.

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the categories of excused absences above. Such absences may also be reflected in a student's final grade.

Absences, which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions. Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards issued quarterly. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, social workers and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

**All absences, even those that are excused, still count as absences and may impact your child's success in school.** Please ensure that your child attends school each and every day your child is healthy enough to do so. School is better with your child here!

## Mental Health Wellness Days

Connecticut law provides students with up to two excused school absences to care for their mental health and wellness (MHW) that may be used in addition to the 9 excused days they may take for any reason. These days cannot be taken on consecutive school days, (e.g., Friday and Monday or Wednesday and Thursday). MHW absences will always be excused when parent or guardian permission is documented, regardless of the number of absences a student has accrued in the school year, but will count towards chronic absence calculations as students are missing opportunities to learn. Parents must call the main office at (203) 407-2050 by 9:00 AM to report an absence with the student's name, teacher's name, reason for absence, and the name of the person calling. When students feel it necessary to be excused from school to tend to their mental health, it is an opportunity for conversations with school personnel regarding their wellness and to connect students and families to additional supports. WWS will engage in systems for monitoring and appropriately supporting students and families when MHW days are taken, including wellness screening and communication with the family and student regarding available systems of support within the school or through outside care providers.

## **Acceptable Use Policy and District Technology**

We are pleased to offer our students access to a computer network, including electronic mail and the Internet. Students who wish to use the computer network **must** have an [Acceptable Use Policy Agreement](#) signed by themselves and a parent or guardian. This document will remain a part of a permanent record for your child. The media specialist will review the guidelines of this policy each year with students during one of their initial media classes.

The Hamden Board of Education has developed a [policy on the Acceptable Use of our Hamden Network and District devices](#). Our schools provide our students with a computer, applications, and storage space on the server for their work. The appropriate use of these resources can help students be successful in school. Students should always charge their devices at home for use the next day.

Students promise to be safe, responsible and respectful in their use of electronic resources at school and at home. Students should know that their teachers may look at their work to be sure that they are keeping their promise to be safe, responsible, and respectful. Students may have consequences including not being able to use resources if they do not keep their promise. At home, if students are not safe, responsible and respectful when using the computer, they may have consequences at school. If students intentionally damage a device or charger or if a device or charger is lost or stolen, families may have to pay to replace it.

## School Hours

|                     | Regular Day | Two-Hour Delayed Opening | Scheduled Early Dismissal |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Arrival:            | 8:20 AM     | 10:20 AM                 | 8:20 AM                   |
| Instruction begins: | 8:35 AM     | 10:35 AM                 | 8:35 AM                   |
| Dismissal           | 3:24 PM     | 3:24 PM                  | 12:55 PM                  |

### Arrival

School doors open at 8:20 AM. WWS staff members supervise students during morning arrival. Students are not permitted to enter the building before 8:20 AM as there is no adult supervision. Before/after school care is available privately through Right at School

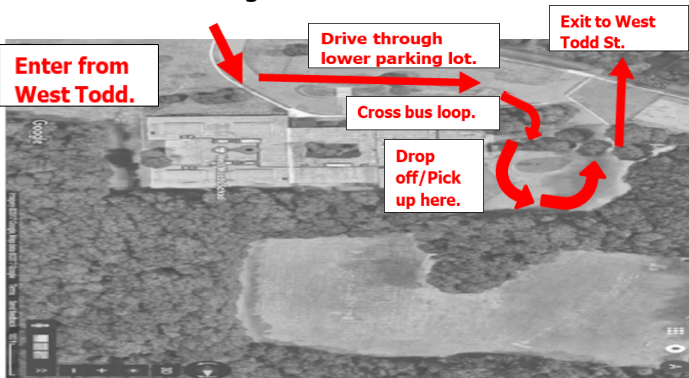
Students arriving after 8:35 AM must report to the main office to be logged as a late arrival. Instruction begins at 8:35 AM.

### Bus arrival:

Students arriving by bus will be dropped off directly in front of the building and will enter through the exterior doors to the right of the main entrance.

### Drop off arrival:

Parents dropping off will enter from West Todd Street, slowly drive through the lower parking lot, carefully cross the bus loop and enter the hardtop by the playground. Parents will remain in their vehicles as staff directs exiting students into the building through the art/gym hallway (Door #5). All vehicles will drive around the hardtop and exit WWS to West Todd Street. Students should exit their vehicle on the passenger (curb) side. If a child needs assistance in exiting the vehicle, please park in the main parking lot and escort the child to the front of the building.



## Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:24 PM.

### Bus dismissal:

Students who take a bus home are invited to dismiss in the order that their buses arrive at school. Dismissal typically takes 10-15 minutes though may be delayed if buses arrive late at WWS. Unless parents notify us in writing on the WWS Elementary School Transportation form that their child is a pick-up, students will be sent home by bus.

### Pick-up dismissal:

- Students who are picked up from school at dismissal will report to the gym when directed.
- Parents picking students up will enter from West Todd Street, slowly drive through the lower parking lot, carefully cross the bus loop and enter the hardtop by the playground (see the diagram on page 8). Vehicles may begin forming a line starting at the basketball hoop by the gym at 3:00 PM.
- Parents will remain in their vehicles as staff directs students to their vehicles.
- Students may only be dismissed to authorized adults, who may be asked to confirm their identity with a government issued photo identification.
- Vehicles will drive around the hardtop and exit WWS to West Todd Street.

### Early dismissal:

When it is necessary for a parent to pick up a child prior to 3:00 PM, please note the following procedures. There are no dismissals from the main office after 3:00 PM for safety reasons as our main office can become very busy during school-wide dismissal.

- Please provide a note to your child's teacher stating the date and time for the dismissal as well as the name of the adult authorized to pick up your child.
- The adult picking up the child must report to the main office; students will be called to the main office for early dismissal once the identity of the authorized adult is verified.

### Dismissal changes

If you need to temporarily change the dismissal plan for your child, please email the main office at [amarena@hamden.org](mailto:amarena@hamden.org) before 2:00 PM. Students should only change buses due to child care issues and this must be done in writing prior to the date of change.

After 2:00 PM we may not be able to get a message to your child prior to dismissal. This will help alleviate any confusion for students, teachers and the bus company. For permanent dismissal changes, please complete a new WWS Elementary School Transportation form.

## Delayed Openings and School Closings

Decisions to cancel school, delay the opening or have an early dismissal are made by the Superintendent of Schools. Decisions are made based on weather predictions and road conditions throughout Hamden. If bad weather or a school emergency forces the cancellation of school for the day or a delay in the starting time, announcements are made on the local radio, television stations, the district website, and ParentSquare. Immediate family members (as outlined in your Powerschool Registration) will be notified through **Parent Square**. Notifications are sent in emails and a phone call, and if you have the **Parent Square App** you will also receive the notification there. Please be sure the office always has an up-to-date phone number with emergency contacts in case of emergency.

For school cancellation information watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the district website. Media outlets will report these closings as "Hamden Public Schools".

| Television   | Radio                       | District Website                                   |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| WTNH Channel 8<br>WVIT Channel 30<br>WFST-TV Channel 3 | WELI 960 AM<br>WTIC 1080 AM | <a href="http://www.hamden.org">www.hamden.org</a> |

When school is closed for the day, all afternoon or evening activities are canceled except when permission is granted by the Superintendent.

### Delayed Opening

During a delayed opening, school buses will pick up your child at the normal time plus the time of the delay. (Ex: If the bus normally picks your child up at 8:00 AM and there is a 2-hour delay, the bus will pick your child up at 10:00 AM).

### Emergency Closing

There is no set time to dismiss school for an emergency school closing. An automated call and/or text message will be made from the district in the event there is an emergency closing so it is imperative that we always have current contact information.

## Bus Transportation

Riding the bus is an extension of school and appropriate behavior is expected. For the safety and comfort of all children, students are expected to follow the PACK expectations.

### Bus Assignments

Bus routes are posted on the district's website. Students are assigned to buses according to neighborhoods. Parents should call First Student Transit at (203) 288-2887 to report any problems concerning the bus and/or drivers. Any issues regarding students should be directed to the school.

## Be a Part of the **PACK** on the Bus

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>P</b><br>Positive and Respectful | Greet Your Driver<br>Follow Adult Directions           |
|                                     | Use an Inside Voice<br>Be Alert to Your Stop           |
| <b>A</b><br>Act Responsibly         | Share a Seat<br>Use Kind Words                         |
| <b>C</b><br>Care for Others         |  |
| <b>K</b><br>Keep Safe               | Stay Seated with Aisles Free<br>Hands and Feet to Self |



Be Your Best Self!

Students may only ride their assigned bus and may only exit the bus at their assigned stop unless prior written permission has been provided by a student's parents to the main office.

Students in Kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 will be returned to the school if an adult is not there to meet them at the stop.

### Late Buses

Parents may call First Student at (203) 288-2887 if a bus is extremely late, either picking students up or dropping students off.

### Bus Violations

Students must always engage in safe behavior while riding the bus and while waiting at a bus stop or returning from the bus stop to their home. Please be reminded that bus service is a privilege. If a student's behavior is unsafe or does not correspond to the PACK expectations, the student may be referred to the principal who may assign disciplinary appropriate consequences, including possible bus suspension. Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the school principal, or her designee, in accordance with the Hamden Board of Education School Policy.

If at any time the bus driver deems it is unsafe to continue driving the bus due to disruptive actions by students, the driver may pull the bus over to the side of the road until the disturbance subsides and/or return the bus to school. In either eventuality, the driver will notify First Student who will immediately notify the school and/or contact the police if necessary.

## **Bicycles**

Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students may ride bicycles to and from school as long as they follow the safety rules and have permission from a parent. Students must obtain a bicycle permission form from the main office and return the completed form signed by a parent. Students must follow all bicycle safety rules and regulations, wear a helmet, and properly secure their bicycle outside. West Woods School is not responsible for theft or damage to bicycles while on the school property.

## **Cafeteria Information**

2025-2026 recess and lunch schedule:

| Time              | Recess  | Lunch   |
|-------------------|---------|---------|
| 10:45 -- 11:05 AM | Grade 1 |         |
| 11:10 -- 11:30 AM | Grade 5 | Grade 1 |
| 11:35 -- 11:55 AM | Grade 2 | Grade 5 |
| 12:00 -- 12:20 PM | Grade 4 | Grade 2 |
| 12:25 -- 12:45 PM | Grade 3 | Grade 4 |
| 12:50 -- 1:10 PM  | Grade 6 | Grade 3 |
| 1:15 -- 1:35 PM   | Grade K | Grade 6 |
| 1:40 -- 2:00 PM   |         | Grade K |

## Meal Prices

| Student Meal Status | Breakfast | Lunch  |
|---------------------|-----------|--------|
| Full Price          | \$1.50    | \$3.10 |
| Reduced             | \$0.30    | \$0.40 |
| Free                | \$0.00    | \$0.00 |

## Breakfast and Lunch information:

No breakfast is served on delayed opening days.

If your child will be eating a school lunch, please review the menu and choose an item your child will enjoy. Children will make a lunch choice by 8:50 AM each day with their teacher. After the lunch count is submitted, children cannot change their mind. You may also send in lunch from home. Please note that we do not have the ability to refrigerate or warm your child's home lunch.

Your child may qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Eligibility is based on household size and income. You can apply online at [www.hamden.org/mealapplication](http://www.hamden.org/mealapplication). Even if your child qualified for free or reduced-price meals last year, a new application must be completed annually. If your student is returning, please be aware that last year's free or reduced-price meal status expires 30 days after the start of new school year, and if the district has not received a new application, your student's status will revert to full-price status

Hamden Public Schools offers [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com), a convenient online service that allows you to securely pay for your child's school meals using your credit/debit card or electronic check. Please note that MySchoolBucks charges a fee for usage. If you would like to avoid this fee please send your students to school with either cash or check (preferred) to be added to their meal account. Please make checks payable to "Hamden School Lunch Fund". Please place checks or cash in an envelope with your student's and teacher's name on it, which should be given to the cafeteria cashier.

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to keep track of student accounts and avoid negative balances. Please read Hamden Public School's charging policy here: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1692727875/hamden/ipxnsgcmlltqwcjnwnwu/MealChargingProcedure2324SY.pdf>.

To view menus, please visit [www.fdmealplanner.com](http://www.fdmealplanner.com). Type in Hamden, and a list of Hamden Public Schools will come up. Click on the name of the school you want, then select breakfast or lunch. From there you can view the monthly menu. Menus can be viewed in multiple languages.

For more information about the food service program, please see the welcome back letter from Whitsons School Nutrition: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1755783434/hamden/zhrt8oaqsabyx9nsy4ds/WhitsonsWelcomeBackParentNewsletter2526DRAFT.pdf>.

For questions regarding school meal service, please contact the food service office at 203-230-1010, or [hamden@whitsons.com](mailto:hamden@whitsons.com). If you have any questions about this letter, please contact them at 203-407-2205 or [mealapplication@hamden.org](mailto:mealapplication@hamden.org).

#### Cafeteria expectations:

Students should follow the PACK expectations for the café in order to provide a healthful, pleasant atmosphere for lunch.

- Good table manners are expected.
- Wait your turn in line. Don't try to squeeze ahead of others.

- Seating is assigned by class. Do not move from one table to another. Once you are seated, stay seated. If you need something, raise your hand and wait for an adult on duty to assist you.

Peanut free tables are available in the cafeteria during lunches. We encourage families to be considerate of students who may have allergies in deciding whether to bring food items like peanut butter for lunch. Students who do consume peanut butter are encouraged to wash their hands before returning to the classroom.

**Be a Part of the **P A C K** in the Cafeteria**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>P</b><br>Positive and Respectful |  Say "Please" and "Thank You"<br> Follow Adult Directions |
| <b>A</b><br>Act Responsibly         |  Clear Your Place<br> Raise Your Hand for Help            |
| <b>C</b><br>Care for Others         |  Use an Inside Voice<br> Invite and Include Others        |
| <b>K</b><br>Keep Safe               |  Walk Carefully<br> Eat Your Lunch Only                   |

 **Be Your Best Self!**

Classroom snacks:

All students will have a snack time during the school day. In the interest of healthy eating, we encourage parents to pack a healthy snack for their children. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles (not glass); sugary drinks and soda are not permitted in the classroom. Students should bring snacks and food equivalent to a single portion as sharing food is not permitted due to allergies. Additionally, in an effort to support families and properly manage medical and/or food allergy concerns, we may ask that some foods are not brought into classrooms and ask you to respect those guidelines. If you have any questions, please speak with your child’s teacher to determine what is appropriate.

Allergy Information:

WWS is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food and other allergies and to supporting parents regarding allergy management. An Allergy Emergency Care Plan is available on the WWS Nurse’s webpage and allergen information concerning school meals is available on the Lunch Menu webpage on the WWS website.

**Health Information**

Daily Health Assessment (see link [here](#))

- Review this every day with your child.
- There is nothing that needs to be sent to school.
- The Daily Health Assessment is a very important first line of

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defense in ensuring the health and wellness of our students while also protecting our entire school community from the risk of infection. Families should contact their child's medical provider or their child's school nurse for additional guidance.

If your child complains of "not feeling well" or was sent home ill the previous day, please assess his/her condition before sending him/her to school. Students who come to school ill or return too soon are often unable to function at their best and may cause other students to become sick. Please note the following guidelines:

- Any child with an elevated temperature of 100 degrees or more should remain home until his/her temperature has been normal without medication for 24 hours.
- If your child vomits or has diarrhea in the morning before school, he/she should stay home. Generally, children should stay home at least 24 hours after the last episode of fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Individuals who have any respiratory disease symptoms must not come to school if:
  - they have a fever (a temperature of 100° F or higher). They should not report in-person until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication;
  - they have tested positive for COVID-19.
- If your child has a rash which you would like to be checked by the school nurse, please accompany him/her to school in the event exclusion from school due to suspicion of communicable disease is necessary.
- Inform the school nurse regarding any diagnosis of communicable disease (strep throat, chicken pox, mononucleosis, head lice, pinkeye, etc.). Children being treated for a communicable disease may return to school after a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment. Students must also be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. A doctor's note may also be requested for return by the school nurse.

Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions.

#### Hand Hygiene:

Classrooms will build in time for frequent hand washing. Hand sanitizers are available in classrooms and throughout the building, especially at entrances and the cafeteria.

## Administration of Medication in School

If your child must take medication while at school, including any over the counter drugs, it can be administered only under the following conditions:

1. An authorization form provided by school personnel is completed and signed by both the primary health care provider and parent/guardian (even for over the counter drugs).
2. Medication, not to exceed a 45-day supply, comes to school in the original bottle or container, properly labeled with the child's name; the name, strength and dosage of the medication; time for administration; date and number of prescription. All over the counter medication must be received in its origins, untampered with, packaging.
3. An adult delivers the medication to the school nurse or the principal. Children are not allowed to transport medication to and from school.

At the conclusion of the school year, all medication must be picked up by a parent/guardian by the end of the last day of school without exception as it will be properly disposed of immediately upon the conclusion of school otherwise.

Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions or need the proper forms for these authorizations.

## Change in Health:

Please report any change in the health status of your child (injury, illness, surgery or family stress, etc.) as it could affect your child's school performance. Health records are kept on each child and are strictly confidential.

## Sixth Grade Physicals:

Sixth grade physicals must be completed and submitted by May 1. If physicals are received after this date, there is no guarantee that the forms will be processed in time for the first day of school in the fall. This can affect your child's entry into Hamden Middle School.

### **West Woods School Nurse**

Delores Deer, RN

203-407-2050 / [ddeer@hamden.org](mailto:ddeer@hamden.org)

The nurse's office is next to the main office.

## **Birthdays**

The faculty and staff are committed to recognizing students for a variety of reasons, including birthdays. Classroom teachers and room parents will coordinate procedures for celebrating student birthdays. All celebrations will conform to the requirements of Hamden's Wellness Plan, specifically that "all foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities before and during the instructional day must meet or exceed Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards for Food and Beverages at School or selected from the list of recommended healthy food choices listed in Appendix B [of the Wellness Plan]."

We strongly encourage non-food ways to celebrate, such as serving as a guest reader, donating a favorite book to the classroom library, or sharing celebratory pencils. Please do not send in balloons, flowers, gifts or other items that will interrupt learning. They will not be allowed to be brought to the classroom. Please contact school administration if you have any questions.

Birthday party invitations will not be distributed at school unless every child in the class is included as we do not wish to exclude any student in the classroom.

## **District-wide Assessments and Data Collection**

Under State of CT law, students in grades 3-6 are required to take the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) in the spring of each year. The SBA assesses a student's academic achievement in the areas of language arts, mathematics and writing. Students in grade 5 all take the Next Generation of Science Standards (NGSS) assessment in the spring of their grade 5 year. In addition, the DIBELS and Math Fact Fluency Assessments will be given to each student up to three times per year. This test is given 1 to 1 with a teacher or trained staff member. Students also take a variety of other curriculum-based assessments including end of unit tests, writing prompts (rubric scores) and informal quick checks to support planning for additional instruction and interventions. Each school will also have students, families and staff take a School Climate Survey two times per year to monitor the success and needs of the school in this area.

## **Dress Code**

Dress Code Students are expected to dress appropriately and safely for school. Children should be comfortable in school, but a child's attire should not be distracting or take away from the learning process. Parents may be called to bring a change of clothing to the school, if a student is wearing clothing that violates the Board Policy. Additional information on [Hamden's Board of Education dress code policy](#).

## **Field Trips**

During the school year your child may go on school-sponsored trips. These trips are directly related to the curriculum and are planned by the teacher. Specific objectives are determined in advance and activities are planned both prior to and after the field trip. It is expected that students follow the same standards of behavior on field trips as is in school. While no student will be denied access to attend a field trip, the school team may request a parent/guardian be present with their child in rare circumstances. A signed permission slip from a parent or guardian is required for every student in order to participate in any field trip.

### Chaperoning a Field Trip

Parent chaperones usually accompany classes. If you wish to volunteer please contact your child's teacher. You will be asked to sign a chaperone agreement, to acknowledge the responsibilities of a chaperone. Chaperones may not bring any other children or family members on the trip.

## **Financial Assistance**

Students will not be denied the opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any parent who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact the principal or social worker to request confidential help.

## **Homeless Students**

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. You can contact your school social worker, principal or Michael McDermott, the Director of Special Education (203) 407-2220 for further assistance.

## **Library Media Center**

The library/media center is a place for information and research and books, magazines, technology, and research materials are available to all students. In order to operate efficiently, guidelines must be followed:

1. The library/media center opens and closes with the school day, unless other arrangements have been made.
2. A replacement fee will be charged for books lost, destroyed or not returned.
3. Students must have permission from a teacher to visit the library/media center.
4. Failure to return borrowed items, or make restitution, may affect a child's ability to borrow books and/or a student's report card being held at the end of the school year until the obligation to the school is met.

## Lost and Found

Lost and found items are located in the cafeteria (eyeglasses, house keys and other "valuable" items are kept in the school office). To avoid the loss of personal items, please be sure a student's belongings are clearly marked with his/her name. The lost and found will be cleaned out on the last day of each marking period.

## Non-Discriminatory Policy

The Hamden Board of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and it does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, and physical or mental handicaps. [Here is a link to the policy.](#)

## Private Technology Devices

For the purposes of this policy, "privately owned technological devices" refers to privately owned desktop computers, personal computing devices, cellular phones, headphones, earbuds, Smartphones, Smartwatches, network access devices, radios, tablets, personal gaming systems, Bluetooth speakers, readers and other electronic signaling devices.

Elementary students (grades K-6) may bring privately owned technological devices to school. However, all such devices must be turned off and be completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack or cubby) for the entire school day (i.e., from arrival until dismissal). All students are prohibited from using privately owned technological devices during instructional time except as specifically permitted by instructional staff to aid in instruction or for instructional purposes or to engage in authorized remote learning. The school is NOT responsible for the loss or damage to any of these devices.

## Tiered Disciplinary Consequences For Violations

Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary consequences, in accordance with the Board of Educations student discipline policy. Students who violate these rules may have their items confiscated. In general, if an alleged violation is found to have occurred, elementary students will be subject to the following consequences, and may be subject to additional discipline for each offense or for additional offenses depending on the individual circumstances, including whether any other school rules or Board policies were violated.

- First offense: The student will be directed to put the personal device away.
- Second offense: The student's privately owned technological device will be confiscated and stored in the main office until the end of the school day in which the infraction occurred.

- Third offense: The student's privately owned technological device will be confiscated and stored in the main office. The student's parent or guardian will be contacted and required to pick-up the device from the principal or designee.

Students are not allowed to bring laser light pens to school. These devices can cause possible harm to eyes and can be disruptive to the learning environment.

## Parents and Families

### Communication with Families

ParentSquare is now the primary platform for school-home communication for Hamden Public Schools. Emergency closings, delayed openings, and reminders of important events are some of the information we will share via ParentSquare. Please keep the main office informed of current phone numbers and email addresses. With ParentSquare families will be able to:

- Receive messages from school via email, text or mobile app.
- Choose to receive information as it comes (Instant) or all at once at around 6:00 PM (Daily Digest).
- Communicate in your preferred language.
- Send two-way texts with automated translation between staff and families.
- Receive attendance notifications with the option to send in a digital note to excuse your student's absence.
- Sign up for parent-teacher conferences.
- Sign permission slips and more from your computer or mobile device.

Information on activating your account, tips for families, and frequently asked questions are available at <https://www.hamden.org/families/parentsquare-information>.

### Download the ParentSquare App



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A newsletter is sent frequently via email to keep parents informed of school events and activities. This newsletter is also posted each week on the school website in the "WWS Weekly" section.

Your first and best stop for specific WWS information including: daily announcements, upcoming events, and links to useful sites! You'll also find main school numbers, links to grade level teachers, and the WWS PTA website, as well as a school calendar. Visit every day at <https://www.hamden.org/westwoods>.

### Address Change

Report changes of address, home or work phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts promptly to keep emergency information current. Cell phone numbers should be submitted as well. If we have an emergency and need to contact you, it will save precious minutes if we have correct information. In the event of a new address, parents must provide two proofs of residency.

### Emergency Forms

The school must have an emergency form for EVERY student. These are important, since they provide valuable information to the school, particularly in case of an emergency. Please keep them updated during the school year.

### Confidentiality

HPS Board of Education Policy # 5125 includes information about student records and confidentiality. Specifically, "Directory Information", includes information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the parent's name, address, the student's name, address, telephone number, photographic, computer and/or video images, major field(s) of study, grade level, enrollment status (full-time; part-time), participation in school-sponsored activities or athletics, weight and height (if the student is a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent previous school(s) attended.

Directory information does not include a student's social security number, student identification number, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems unless the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN or password.

Parents have an opportunity to object to such disclosure. An objection to the disclosure of directory information shall be good for only one school year. Please contact the Principal with any objections to the disclosure of Directory Information in accordance with Board of Education Policy.

During the course of the school year, our PTA seeks volunteers to assist in special events for your children. The PTA will request your contact information which you are free to not disclose.

### Problems/Chain of Command

Hamden Board of Education policy urges parents to seek early solutions for school-related concerns and to begin their attempts by contacting the staff member most closely involved. If you or your child is experiencing a school-related problem, please let your child's teacher know. You can email the teacher or communicate through ParentSquare or call our office at 203-407-2050. Please remember that staff are working with students during the school day and may not be available.

### Visiting WWS

Parents are always welcome at West Woods School. As a courtesy, parents must make arrangements with a child's teacher prior to visiting a classroom. WWS staff are also able to accommodate virtual meetings and conferences.

To ensure the safety of all children, all guests entering the school building must sign in at the main office and be prepared to show a government issued photo identification. A visitor's badge must be worn while in the building. Staff personnel will direct guests to the office if the guest is not wearing a badge.

We ask parents to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Consult with your child's teacher to establish a day/time or call to make an appointment with a staff member, rather than just drop by the school. Of course, visits are always welcome, but we want to ensure you will be coming at a time when the class will be in their classroom or when the staff member is available.
- To ensure that instruction is not disrupted, parents are asked not to conference with the teacher during these visits.
- When entering/exiting the building, please do not hold or open the door for visitors; this may seem impolite, but it is necessary to ensure security.
- Visitors will not be allowed access to the building prior to or after school hours unless there is a specific event or meeting.
- Visitors must also sign out so we are certain of guests who may be in the building in the event of an emergency.

## **Parking**

Please do not park in handicapped or reserved spaces or in the Fire Lane when you come into the building as this creates a safety hazard. If a car is illegally parked, an announcement may be made within the building for you to move your car before it is towed at your expense.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

### Standards-Based Report Cards

Report cards give parents a broad view of a student's progress in school. Hamden Public School report cards are directly linked to the Common Core State Standards (learning expectations) for your child's grade. The statements on your child's report card are meant to briefly summarize and explain what your child should know and be able to do. Please note that these statements reflect multiple standards that are assessed, as it is not feasible to list every individual standard on the report card. Your child's teacher will take into account your child's performance on various learning tasks and assessments to determine your child's progress towards mastery of a given standard during the marking period. Elementary Report Cards are issued three times a year: October, March and June.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

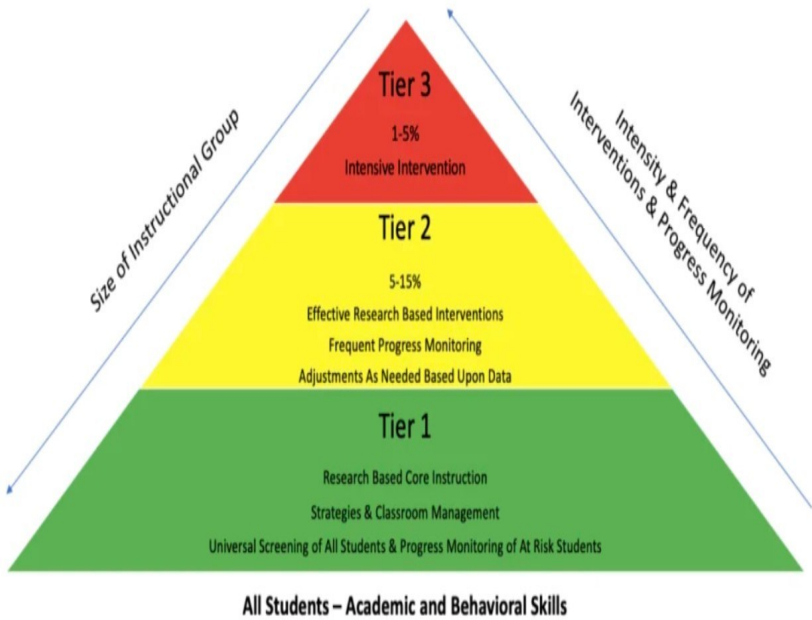
Parent-teacher conferences give teachers the chance to provide parents with detailed and specific information about their child. Depending upon the grade level, students may be part of the conferencing process. Although parent-teacher conferences are officially held in October and March, families are encouraged to ask a teacher to meet if concerns develop that need additional conversation. Teachers will try to accommodate you as best as they can to find a mutually agreeable time to meet. The expectation is that conferences are in person, but if you require a phone or virtual meeting, please make that request directly to your child's teacher.

Below are a few guidelines that you might find helpful in preparing for a conference:

- Make a list of questions or concerns you would like to discuss.
- Talk with your child before you attend.
- Please be on time as staff are limited in their availability to meet.
- Stress the positives and discuss possible suggestions for improvement.
- Discuss key points with your child when you get home.

## Scientifically Researched-Based Intervention (SRBI)

The SRBI Team is composed of the SRBI Coordinator, the Principal, Teachers (including Social Worker & Psychologist) and tutors within our school. All students receive research-based curricula and small group instruction as part of these services. The team also reviews math and literacy data to identify students that need additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 support to make progress in reading and math towards meeting grade level standards. This program provides an intervention for a student who is below grade level in reading or mathematics. This is a regular education service provided to students. Students receive SRBI support during a block of time each day devoted to enrichment or intervention.



Please contact Kristen Pierson at [kpieron@hamden.org](mailto:kpieron@hamden.org) for more information.

## Recess

Recess is an important time when students can socialize with their peers. During this time, students learn how to cooperate with others to organize or create games and activities and converse with friends. Weather permitting, children will have recess outside. Please make sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing and footwear and these articles are clearly labeled. In the event of inclement weather, students will have indoor recess. Students should not bring any toys, games sports equipment, electronic games or other devices to school for recess.

This will eliminate any difficulty with personal property damage or theft. Although we believe that students need exercise and structured social time, there may be occasions when a student may need an alternative recess placement for safety reasons, at the discretion of the principal.

## Recognition

We believe in the importance of celebrating and reinforcing students' good choices and accomplishments and have several ways of doing so:

- Superintendent's Student of the Month: Each month, staff members will submit the name of one student to receive recognition by the superintendent for academic excellence and good citizenship.
- Weekly PACK awards: Students receive "PACK cards" when they demonstrate exemplary examples of our PACK expectations. Each week one PACK card is selected from among the PACK cards received and that student receives recognition on our school website (under "WWS PACK Winners") and special privileges for the week.

## Be a Part of the **PACK** at Recess

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>P</b><br>Positive and<br>Respectful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Follow Adult Directions</li> <li> Play Fairly</li> </ul>                |
| <b>A</b><br>Act<br>Responsibly         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Use Equipment Properly</li> <li> Report Problems to an Adult</li> </ul> |
| <b>C</b><br>Care for<br>Others         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Invite and Include Others</li> <li> Use Kind Words</li> </ul>           |
| <b>K</b><br>Keep Safe                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Play with Care</li> <li> Control Your Body</li> </ul>                   |

Be Your  
Best Self!

- Monthly PACK "Town Hall Meetings" : Each grade level will host a Town Hall meeting during a month of the school year highlighting a theme in our PACK expectations. Students will be honored for various awards at these Town Hall Meetings. Families of the grade level hosting the Town Hall meeting will be invited to share in their children's presentation.

## **Safety**

All schools in Hamden have video surveillance and locked doors for the safety of students and staff. For entry, please ring the doorbell and wait until someone is available to answer. You will be asked for your name and reason for entering. Once the door is unlocked for you, please come to the office for assistance. If anyone arrives as you enter, please ask them to ring the bell.

The main office is staffed from 7:45 AM until 3:45 PM. If you have an appointment with a teacher after 3:45 PM, please be sure to remind the teacher to meet you at the front door. As you leave our school, please make sure the door closes securely behind you.

Please drop off forgotten items and messages in the main office. We will make sure your child receives these items as soon as possible. Children are not permitted to return to their classrooms after dismissal for forgotten items.

Due to health department regulations, animals are not permitted in the classrooms or on school grounds at any time unless the animals are part of a special approved program.

### Safety Drills

On occasion, West Woods School will practice important safety drills including: evacuations, lockdown, shelter in place, and full or partial evacuations. Students will be taught these procedures during the first weeks of school.

### Weapons

Students are NEVER to bring weapons or any other item that may cause a distraction or harm another person to school. Such items include, but are not limited to: real guns, toy guns, water guns, cap guns, laser pointers, knives, nail clippers, Swiss army knives, fireworks, matches, lighters, drugs, alcohol or cigarettes. Possession of items that can potentially endanger others can lead to severe consequences.

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## **School Climate Including Challenging Behavior and Bullying**

The Hamden Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to identifying strategies to improve school climate, including, but not limited to, by responding to challenging behavior and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including restorative practices.

See [Policy 5131.911 School Climate](#) and [Policy 5144.2 Restorative Practice Response](#).

If you have any concerns regarding your student the recipient of Challenging Behavior, please reach out to your School Climate Specialist (Building Principal) and complete a [Challenging Behavior Form](#).

### **Expulsion**

Administration may remove a student from all classes when the student deliberately causes a serious disruption to the teaching and learning process within the classroom. More information can be found on the [Board of Education website](#). [Policy # 5144](#).

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Board of Education prohibits sexual harassment or intimidation of its students and employees. Any student or employee who believes he or she has been the subject of sexual harassment should contact the District's Equity/Title IX Coordinator or Superintendent Gary Highsmith at 203- 407-2000. [A link to the policy can be found here](#).

### **Suspension**

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion should not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

No student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instances, the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

Students in Pre K through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student's conduct has caused physical harm. Students in grades Preschool through grade 2 who are suspended out of school must receive services that are trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate and align with any behavioral intervention plan, IEP or 504 Plan the student may have. Administration must consider whether to convene a PPT meeting to conduct an evaluation to determine if the student may require special education or related services. Finally, students in grades Pre K to 2 must not be suspended for longer than five days if ten days were warranted per occurrence.

### **Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Mandatory Reporting**

Any school staff including but not limited to teachers, superintendents, nurses, social workers, psychologists, principals, coaches, and paraprofessionals are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility, which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

### **Student Support Services**

Teachers are trained to recognize learning problems and to seek special help for students when needed. Pupil Personnel staff (School Psychologist and Social Worker and/or Special Education instructional staff) act as consultants to classroom teachers and work closely with them to provide interventions or individualized educational services for students, as authorized by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). Parents should keep the school informed of any changes or concerns that may impact their child's performance in school. An appointment can be arranged to speak with an administrator or staff member to discuss support for students, available resources or referrals to agencies that may provide assistance.

Please contact the Principal or Social Worker as soon as possible if your child is experiencing any issue at school that interferes with his or her learning.

Americans With Disabilities Act

For questions, concerns or complaints concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 – call Superintendent Gary Highsmith at 203-407-2000.

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Civil Rights  
33 Arch Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02110-1491

Upon request, this material is available in alternate formats. For matters concerning accommodations, call Superintendent Gary Highsmith at 203-407-2000.

**Valuables**

Students are to bring only items that are needed for learning to school. Students should not bring valuables to school such as large sums of money, toys, sentimental jewelry, cameras, hobby collections, video games, or other electronic devices. The school is not responsible for loss or damage. Such items will be collected from students and returned only to a parent.

WWS PTA Executive Board

The West Woods PTA provides a variety of programs and services including beautification of school grounds, coordination of after-school activities, family activities, cultural enhancement programs, Field Day, scholarships, enhancing academic materials and offering

|                |                               |  |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| President      | Nicole Kavalan                | <a href="mailto:president@westwoodspta.org">president@westwoodspta.org</a>         |
| Vice-President | Amy Apuzzo and<br>Tim Maguire | <a href="mailto:vicepresident@westwoodspta.org">vicepresident@westwoodspta.org</a> |
| Treasurer      | TBD                           | <a href="mailto:treasurer@westwoodspta.org">treasurer@westwoodspta.org</a>         |
| Secretary      | Jassury Delosrios -<br>Diaz   | <a href="mailto:secretary@westwoodspta.org">secretary@westwoodspta.org</a>         |

## West Woods School Family Handbook

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The PTA works on behalf of its members, providing state and national information, influence and recognition to help unite parents, teachers and the community for the common good of all children. Together, members can create a healthy, nurturing environment for improving opportunities for all children. For more information about the PTA, visit our website at [www.westwoodspta.com](http://www.westwoodspta.com).

### Fundraising

Fundraising activities support and fund WW PTA sponsored programs including: Cultural Arts, Curriculum Enhancement Materials, and special grants exist for teacher's projects, scholarships, field trips and the operating expenses of WW PTA. Monetary donations in lieu of family participation are accepted.

### Membership

Parents, guardians, teachers and community members are invited and encouraged to join and support WW PTA. Membership allows you to have a voice and make a difference at West Woods School. You must be a paid WW PTA member to serve on the Board of Directors or as a Committee Chairperson. A portion of the membership dues goes to Connecticut and National PTA as well as the West Woods PTA. Join now and be an informed parent!

### PTA Meetings

PTA meeting dates and links to join in virtual meetings are posted on the WWS PTA website at: <https://www.westwoodspta.org/calendar/meetings>.

### Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to volunteer. After-school programs, the WWS Yearbook, the "Tree Shop" school store, and room parents all are supported by parent volunteer service. Please see the WWS PTA website for additional information.

## West Woods School Governance Equity Council

### What is a School Governance Council?

School Governance Councils serve in an advisory capacity and are charged with assisting the school administration in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement.

### Background:

School Governance Councils were created by the CT Public Act 10-111 to enable parents, school staff, students (where appropriate) and community members to work together to improve student achievement. The WWS Governance Equity Council currently meets on a monthly schedule.

Our WWS Governance Equity Council will carry out the principles in the **HPS Diversity statement** in line with our mission statement: "Equity means increasing opportunities for everyone to live and grow into their best life possible. We are accountable for existing bias, prejudice, discrimination, and privilege and how these things impact our community. We will move each other forward with, and for, the power to be our best selves." School Governance Councils serve in an *advisory capacity and assist the school administration in making decisions, including the areas listed below:*

- analyze school achievement, demographic, and/or climate data and school needs as they relate to the school's improvement plan;
- assist the principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement;
- develop and approve a written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians; and
- work with school administrators in identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning.

### **WWS Governance Equity Council Highlights**

- Analyzing school climate data to identify areas for improvement.
- Recommending activities to involve families:
  - Coordinating high school foreign language students to tutor our elementary students seeking additional assistance and/or connections.
  - Designing activities or resources for teachers to use in the classroom.
  - Creating templates for family volunteers to speak about different cultures, holidays, jobs, and other favorite topics.

### **How Can I Participate?**

The School Equity Council consists of Hamden community members, West Woods School Teachers, Parents, Guardians, and Students (as appropriate). **We are currently looking for more parent volunteers to be a part of this amazing work!** If you are interested, please email the council at [westwoodsequity@gmail.com](mailto:westwoodsequity@gmail.com).

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## **West Woods School Student and Family Agreement**

Please sign and return this page to your child's teacher to indicate that you have read the Student & Family Handbook by Friday, September 5, 2025. This Handbook is available on our website. You may request to receive a paper copy of this handbook and understand that live links will not be accessible through the paper copy and will review those links on an electronic device.

### **Students agree to:**

- ✓ Learn something new, participate in class every day, and try my best.
- ✓ Get along with my classmates and bring any problems to an adults' attention.
- ✓ Read every day in school, complete homework, and read every night at home.
- ✓ Talk to my family about what I am learning in class.
- ✓ Bring home notices and other important information about school activities to my parents/guardians.
- ✓ Talk to my teachers, parents/guardians or other trusted adult if something is bothering me or I need help.

**I have read the Hamden Elementary Student-Family Handbook and I understand my responsibilities as a student.**

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent/Guardians agree to:**

- ✓ Ensure my child is on time for school, attends school daily, and has the materials needed for school.
- ✓ Monitor my child's progress and contact the teacher early if concerns arise; attend Report Card conferences.
- ✓ Support my child in following the school's expectations for behavior.
- ✓ Read and respond to notices, forms, and notes from the school and teachers and on the website.
- ✓ Monitor homework and provide a quiet space for my child to read nightly.
- ✓ Attend school-related family events and consider joining the PTA.
- ✓ Monitor my child's screen time and social media use.
- ✓ Talk to my child about the importance of education and trying doing your best every day.

**I have read the Hamden Student-Family Handbook and I understand my responsibilities as a Parent/Guardian.**

**Parent/Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_