



WEST DES MOINES
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

RESOURCES FOR ALL WDMCS HIGH SCHOOL FAMILIES

2026-27

Handbook Language Statement

English	The handbook includes important information about your student's school. You can request oral translation or interpretation of this information. Contact Natalie French, WDMCS Multilingual Program Director, at 515-633-5173 or frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Arabic	يتضمن الكتيب معلومات مهمة حول مدرسة الطالب. يمكنك طلب ترجمة شفوية أو كتابية. اتصل ب ناتالي فرينج المسؤولة عن برامج متحدثي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة ثانية، على 5156335173 او frenchn@wdmcs.org
Dari	در این کتاب رهنما معلومات مهم در مورد مکتب شاگرد شما موجود است. شما می توانید برای ترجمه شفاهی این معلومات درخواست کنید. با ناتالی فرینج مسؤول پروگرام چند زبانه برای مکاتب ویست دیماین از طریق شماره ویا ایمیل آدرس 5173-633-515 frenchn@wdmcs.org در تماس شوید.
Dinka	Athör ë thöñjë käñ anöñj thön/wël thiekiic në biäkke thukul ë menhdun-thukul. Yin lëu ba thiëc në wërë yic ë wël cïke göt cï geriic ka/wälë wël ë thok cï luel cïke wariic e thön këñë. Yuöpë/cöl Natalie French, Bëny ë WDMCS ESOL, në 515-633-5173 ic ka/wälë frenchn@wdmcs.org
French	Le manuel comprend des informations importantes sur l'école de votre élève. Vous pouvez solliciter une traduction orale ou une interprétation de ces informations. Contactez Natalie French, Directrice de WDMCS ESOL, au 515-633-5173 ou frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Hakha Chin	Hi handbook ahhin abiapi mi na fa sianginn kong a tial. Tamdeuh theih na duh holhlet na herh ahcun; Natalie French, WDMCS Multilingual Program Director, at 515-633-5173 or frenchn@wdmcs.org ah request tuah khoh a si.
Pashto	په دي لارښوود کتاب کی ستاسو د زده کوونکي د ښوونځي په اړه مهم معلومات شامل دي. تاسو کولی شئ د دی معلوماتو شفاهی ترجمی لپاره غوښتنه وکړئ. له ناتالی فرینج د ویست دیماین د ښوونځیو د څو ژبني پروگرام له مشري سره د تېلفون د 5173-633-515 شمېرې یا دي برېښنالیک frenchn@wdmcs.org له لارې اړیکه ونیسئ.
Somali	Buug-gacmeedkan waxaa ku jira macluumaad muhiim ah oo ku saabsan dugsiiga ardaygaaga. Waxaad codsan kartaa turjumaan afka ah ama turjumaada macluumaadkan. Kala xiriir Natalie French, Agaasimaha WDMCS Multilingual Program, lambarka 515-633-5173 ama frenchn@wdmcs.org
Spanish	El manual incluye información importante sobre la escuela de su estudiante. Puede solicitar traducción o interpretación oral de esta información. Comuníquese con Natalie French, Directora de WDMCS Multilingual Program, al 515-633-5173 o frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Swahili	Kitabu cha mwongozo kinajumuisha maelezo muhimu kuhusu shule ya mwanafunzi wako. Unaweza kuomba tafsiri ya usemi au ukalimani wa maelezo haya. Wasiliana na Natalie French, Mkurugenzi wa WDMCS Multilingual Program, katika 515-633-5173 au frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Tigrinya	እቲ ናይ መምርሒ መጽሓፍ ብዛዕባ ቤት ትምህርቲ ተምህራይ/ሪትኩም ኣገደስቲ ሓበሬታ ዘማለእ እዩ። ናይዚ ሓበሬታ ናይ ቃል ትርጉም ወይ መስተርጓሚ ክትሓቱ ትክእሉ እኹም። ን ናታሊ ፍረንቻ (Natalie French)፣ ኣይሪክተር WDMCS Multilingual Program፣ ብ 515-633-5173 ወይ frenchn@wdmcs.org ርኽብዎ።
Vietnamese	Cẩm nang bao gồm những thông tin quan trọng về trường học của con em bạn. Bạn có thể yêu cầu dịch thuật qua miệng hoặc bằng văn bản thông tin này. Liên hệ với Natalie French, Giám đốc Multilingual Program WDMCS, theo số 515-633-5173 hoặc frenchn@wdmcs.org

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West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) Overview

Mission

Educate, empower, and inspire lifelong learners.

Vision

WDMCS cultivates belonging, engagement, and mutual respect for our diverse cultures, lived experiences, and values. We strive to ensure:

- Inclusive and safe learning and work environments.
- Academic excellence.
- Robust growth opportunities and pathways for students and staff.
- Fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

Core Values

Equitable Access: We celebrate and culturally affirm the human differences of our community. We strive to have transformative policies, practices, and procedures that meet the needs of each student, family, and staff.

Evidence-Based and Personalized Instruction: We adapt to meet each student's needs. We have high expectations, culturally relevant instruction, and a strengths-based approach.

Meaningful Collaborative Relationships: We foster authentic relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with students, families, staff, and community. We hold all relationships in high regard, including adult to adult; adult to student; and student to student.

Systemic Implementation and Accountability: We continuously measure, assess, and improve our effectiveness and the quality of our programs and services.

Strategic Directions

1. Improve our practices in teaching, learning, assessment, and cultural responsiveness to increase student learning outcomes.
2. Provide equitable structures, processes, and supports that meet each student's needs.
3. Foster a workplace that nurtures a healthy and accountable culture.
4. Create authentic family-community partnerships with sustained systems of communication and engagement.
5. Empower staff to leverage data to improve operations, decision-making, and organizational effectiveness.

Boundaries

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

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

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

- Indian Hills Junior High: Clive, Crestview, Crossroads Park, and Westridge
- Stilwell Junior High: Fairmeadows, Hillside, Jordan Creek, and Western Hills
- Valley Southwoods Freshman High School: serves grade 9 and Career and Technical Education programming for grades 9-12
- Valley High School: serves grades 10-12 and students in grade 9 registered in select classes
- Starting 2026-2027, WDMCS Alternative Education Program is supported at multiple sites

For information about elementary school boundaries or a map of the district, please visit the district website related to boundary information online at discover.wdmcs.org/boundaries.

About Our High Schools

Valley High School

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

Principal

Dr. Shane Christensen
christensens@wdmcs.org

Associate Principals

Shannon Campbell
campbells@wdmcs.org

Jason Lyons
lyonsj@wdmcs.org

Chris Novak
novakc@wdmcs.org

Megan Thomsen
thomsenm@wdmcs.org

Activities and Athletics Director (AD)

Zac Sinram
sinramz@wdmcs.org

Valley Southwoods Freshman High School

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

Principal

Rob Randazzo
randazzor@wdmcs.org

Associate Principal

Haley Hockensmith
hockensmithh@wdmcs.org

*Principals are supervised by:
Executive Director of Secondary Education
515-633-5056

AD is supervised by Valley High School
Principal.

Principals supervise their associate
principals.

Principals' Welcome

Dear Families and Students,

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Rob Randazzo, Valley Southwoods Principal

Dr. Shane Christensen, Valley High School Principal

Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

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

General School Information

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

Schedules

Academic Calendar

The official school district activity calendar (www.wdmcs.org/our-district/calendar) is your complete reference for district activities and events. The Calendar at a Glance (<https://discover.wdmcs.org/calendar-at-a-glance>) is also available to view or print online. Our website will translate the calendar into Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, Swahili, and Tigrinya. Please visit the Valley Southwoods or Valley High School website for current daily schedules.

- <https://southwoods.wdmcs.org>
- <https://valley.wdmcs.org>

Activities and Athletics Calendars:

- <https://tigers.wdmcs.org>
 - o View directions to athletic events
- <https://www.gobound.com/ia/schools/wdmvalley>
 - o Athletic and Activity Schedules, stats, rosters, registration
- <https://www.cimltickets.com/>
 - o Ticketing for Valley and CIML events

School Hours

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

Valley Southwoods Office Hours

Student Services 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Media Center 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
Health Office Hours 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

School will close at 3:45 p.m. Unless students are under the direct supervision of an adult, they are to be out of the building. Students should also not be on the campus of any other WDMCS buildings after 4 p.m., unless they are enrolled in a sport or activity and are directly under the supervision of an assigned adult.

Valley Office Hours

Student Services 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Media Center 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
Health Office Hours 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

School will close at 3:45 p.m. Unless students are under the direct supervision of an adult, they are to be out of the building. Students should also not be on the campus of any other

WDMCS buildings after 4 p.m., unless they are enrolled in a sport or activity and directly under the supervision of an assigned adult.

Attendance

We prepare students for postsecondary learning, careers, and successful lives when everyone is present and engaged. We are committed to ensuring that each student feels connected and belongs in WDMCS.

Why Attendance is Important

- Consistent attendance helps children reach early academic and developmental milestones and also provides a foundation for future success.
- Students who attend regularly are more likely to develop positive relationships with peers and staff, stay academically engaged, and connect their families to community resources.
- Regular attendance also supports increased graduation rates.

Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

A student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% percent of school days in a grading period, which is 18 or more days in a year. This equals only two days a month, nine days per semester or six days per trimester. A student is considered truant if they miss 20% of school days in a grading period, which is 17 days in a semester and 12 days in a trimester.

Compulsory Attendance

Children over age six and under age 16 by Sept. 15, in proper physical and mental condition to attend school are subject to compulsory attendance at WDMCS ([Board Policy 501.03: Compulsory Attendance](#)). Those students must also comply with Iowa Senate File 2435, which outlines intervention measures school districts must take in response to chronic absenteeism. This includes:

- Notifying the county attorney and sending a notice to parents when a student misses 10% of school days in a grading period
- Potential initiation of a school engagement meeting between the student, parent/guardian and school official when a student misses 15% of school days in a grading period. The purpose of the meeting is to create a prevention plan. The school will monitor compliance with the plan and contact the parent/guardian once per week.
- Referral to the county attorney could occur if the plan is violated or the student's absences surpass 20% of school days in a grading period.

Truancy determinations and required actions are not applied to a student who meets one of the following exemptions:

- Completed requirement for graduation or obtained a high school equivalency diploma
- Excused for sufficient reason by a court of record or judge
- Attending religious services or receiving religious instructions
- Unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reasons(s)

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) that affects attendance
- Section 504 plan under the Federal Rehabilitation Act that affects attendance

Notifying Your School

If your child needs to stay home or be late for school, please call the school office or email swattendance@wdmcs.org (VSW) and vhsattendance@wdmcs.org (VHS) before the start of the school day and report your child's name and reason for the absence or tardiness. If you know of a planned absence, you can report that information through Infinite Campus. View instructions at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/report-absence-online>.

Attendance and Participation in Activities and Athletics

A student must attend at least half of the scheduled classes in order to participate in any events, activities, or games that day unless administration approves their participation.

Dismissal for Tournaments

Excused absences will be allowed if Valley or Valley Southwoods is participating during the regular school day for state-sanctioned tournaments. Parents/guardians must notify the school if their student wishes to be excused to attend a tournament. Though excused by the school, this absence is not exempt according to state law.

Tardiness

For students to succeed in their classes, it is essential that they arrive on time. Students are considered tardy if they miss up to 50% of the class. They will be considered absent if they miss more than 50% of the scheduled class period. Students who arrive late to the building must enter through the main office, sign in, and receive a pass. They should then go directly to the first class of the day. Students who are late to class throughout their day, however, should report directly to class. Excessive tardiness may result in school administration working with the parent/guardian and student to address any concerns and co-create a positive solution.

Nutrition

Nutrition Program

The School Nutrition Program is established to provide nutritious meals to students and school personnel, ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations. The program supports student well-being and academic success through access to healthy food options.

[Board Policy 710.01: School Nutrition Program](#)

Student Meal Accounts

Each student has an individual meal account used to access meals, purchase à la carte items, and support the management of special dietary needs. The meal account system provides confidential access to free and reduced-price meals for students who qualify. Families may view income eligibility guidelines and complete an online application by visiting:

www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/nutrition/free-and-reduced-meals.

Pricing and Payments

Meal prices for the 2026-27 school year have not been set as of March 1, 2026. For updated pricing and payment information for breakfast, lunch and Ala Carte items, and to add money to your student's account, visit

www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/nutrition/prices-and-payments.

Menus

Menus and detailed nutritional information for breakfast and lunch can be found at wdmcs.nutrislice.com.

Free/Reduced Meal Information

WDMCS offers all families a chance to apply for meals at no cost or a reduced price. To view federal income guidelines, learn more, and apply for free and reduced meals, visit www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/nutrition/free-and-reduced-meals.

Breakfast and Lunch

Several meal entree options are available at both breakfast and lunch including self-serve fruit and vegetable bars to allow students to select from a variety of offerings. Nutritional information and menus can be found at wdmcs.nutrislice.com. Breakfast will be offered daily starting 30 minutes prior to the bell.

A La Carte Items

School cafeterias also offer a la carte items for purchase at breakfast and lunch. Students must have a positive meal account balance in order to purchase individual items. This includes cartons of milk not served as part of a meal.

If you would like to restrict your student from being able to purchase these items, please create a restriction on your student's account in the family portal at www.schoolcafe.com/WESTDESMOINESCOMMUNITYSD or call the Nutrition Department at 515-633-5085 for assistance.

Allergies

WDMCS promotes a safe and inclusive allergy aware environment for all students. Students with allergies may be entitled to services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Accommodations and/or modifications will be considered and addressed on a case by case basis. Fluid milk substitutions can be requested by parent/guardian signature. Available options are listed on the diet modification request form. Water is also available free of charge in all cafeterias.

If your student needs diet modifications, a physician needs to complete the form:

<https://discover.wdmcs.org/nutrition-services..>

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

Other Student Information

Closed Lunch/Food Delivery

Food delivery by restaurants/companies is strictly prohibited. Students who choose to have food delivered by outside delivery services will not be provided access to those food items. This is very important for us to ensure the safety of our building. Additionally, students are to stay on campus during lunch, unless explicitly granted permission by the building principal. Families should not release their students to go off campus for lunch to prioritize student safety.

Café V (Valley High School only)

Café V is a student-run restaurant open one day a week, where students take the lead in designing menus, predicting sales, and honing their cooking skills. Meals are \$10 and available for dine-in or curbside pickup. Dine-in hours are from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Learn more at <https://valley.wdmcs.org/our-school/cafe-v>.

Tiger Perk Coffee Shop (Valley High School only)

The Tiger Perk Coffee Shop located in Valley High School sells popcorn, and “grab n’ go” snack items. The coffee shop is open Monday through Friday from first period to fourth period. This is 8:20-11:06 a.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:20-11:26 a.m. Friday.

Food Deliveries

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

Miscellaneous Information

Fees

Each student pays a book fee. Students may elect to purchase an activity ticket for regular season athletic events within the Central Iowa Metropolitan League, a yearbook, and upgraded project materials within certain courses. A combination lock is provided for the physical education locker. If the lock is lost, the student will be responsible for a replacement cost. View current fee list online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/school-fees>.

Families can contact the building principal for financial assistance. Please also refer to the information on the waiver of fees below.

Financial assistance may be available for activities such as debate, band, drama, choir, robotics and athletics. Contact the activity's sponsor or coach for more information.

Waiver of Student Fees

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

If you qualify for free and reduced-price meals, you may also be eligible to have student fees waived or partially waived. When you complete online enrollment, select "YES" when asked about fee waivers.

The Waiver of Student Fees may also cover certain test fees. Contact a school counselor for more information.

Fee for Transcript

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

Students can request two transcripts at no charge, and there is no charge for military recruiters (please contact the Registrar). There is a fee for graduates, organizations requesting transcripts, and requests beyond the two (2) free transcripts. Students who may need assistance regarding the fee can contact their school counselor.

Lost and Found

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

Pets/Service Animals

Student safety and the cleanliness of the building are put at risk when animals accompany their owners for a drop-in visit to school. Pets are not allowed in WDMCS facilities without prior written consent by a building administrator. In keeping with state and federal law, WDMCS recognizes that employees or students may need to use or have access to qualified service animals. Students or staff who need service animals, which are defined by law as “animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities,” are welcome to consult with their building administrator.

School Supplies

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

Communication and Family Involvement

Technology and 1:1 Chromebooks

WDMCS strives to create a technology-rich environment for its entire learning community.

Board Policy 605.08: Technology Use By Students

Students in grades K-12 receive a Chromebook for educational purposes. District-provided technology resources exist solely for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policy, as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Chromebooks are the property of WDMCS. Students should have no expectation of privacy related to content created, websites searched, or documents saved.

Chromebooks provide integration with Google tools such as Docs, Sheets, and Slides, as well as the Canvas Learning Management System. WDMCS uses Google services including Gmail, YouTube, Google Earth, and Google Maps. Access is also granted to Google Gemini. If you would like to restrict your student's internet access to not include services like YouTube, please email your building principal to make the request.

Learn more about WDMCS technology services, including frequently asked questions, student and family Chromebook responsibilities, and details on the district's partnership with web-filtering and online safety vendor, Securly, at discover.wdmcs.org/technology-department.

Digital Learning & Student Information Systems

Canvas Learning Management System – Viewing Academic Work and Grades

Canvas is the official learning management system for WDMCS. A learning management system is a software that helps provide, track, and report on classes and assignments. Canvas provides parents/guardians and students with greater access to their curriculum and learning by housing important student curricular expectations and information. This could include their online textbook, links to resources, homework, videos, assessments, online discussions, and so much more. For convenience, an app for this resource is available for download. Learn more about Canvas online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/canvas>.

Infinite Campus – Student Information Management System

Infinite Campus is the official student information management system for WDMCS. This program increases access to student information for our teachers and administrators. Infinite Campus also allows students and parents/guardians to view some of this information through a secure internet connection.

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

Updating Information in Infinite Campus

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

Learn more at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/IC-parent-login>.

Xello – Career Information System

Xello is the official career information system for WDMCS students in grades 8-12. This online program provides students with tools to learn about careers, assess their interests and skills, and develop future plans. A companion Xello Family portal allows parents/guardians to view their child's activities and progress within the platform. Log in at <https://login.xello.world/account/>.

Assessments

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

Valley Southwoods

Spring

- English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) – optional
- Seal of Biliteracy – optional
- AP Testing – optional
- Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)*

Valley High School

Fall

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

Spring

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

*state-required assessments

Surveys

To provide the best possible service to our students and families, we need reliable data and feedback. Surveys are one way our district gathers this valuable information. WDMCS distributes various student surveys throughout the year. Parents and guardians will be informed of any state-mandated surveys. They may also be notified in advance of other student surveys and can let the school know if they do not want their student to participate. WDMCS follows the guidelines outlined in the [State of Iowa Senate File 496](#).

General Communication and Logistics

Change of Address/Telephone Number

To update a home address or phone number during the school year, parent/guardian(s) or students should contact the school office.

Complaints Regarding School Personnel

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

How to Sign Up for Group Email to Parents/Guardians

If you wish to receive email communication, please make sure that we have a current email address

in Infinite Campus. You may provide this information during registration or at any time during the school year.

Parent/Guardian-Teacher Organization

Parent/guardian-teacher organizations are independent groups that help support the district. WDMCS has no oversight or control over their funds. They work with school administrators to support building goals.

Parents/guardians of Valley and Valley Southwoods are invited to join the PTO, which was founded with these goals:

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

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

Parents/guardians can get involved with the district in many ways beyond the PTO. Contact your principal for more opportunities.

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

Parents/guardians enter the building through the front door and follow the protocol outlined in the Visitors and Volunteers section of this handbook.

If you have any questions or would like to become more actively involved, visit <https://valley.wdmcs.org> or <https://southwoods.wdmcs.org>.

Social Media

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

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

Valley Southwoods:

- <https://www.facebook.com/wdmsouthwoods>

Valley High School:

- <https://www.facebook.com/valley.wdmcs>
- <https://x.com/WDMCS>
- <https://x.com/vhstigers>

Staff Directory

The district continues to provide ways to assist with communication between school, families, and the community through the internet. Our district website provides a “one-stop shop” staff directory page. <https://www.wdmcs.org/our-district/about/employee-directory>

Translation and Interpretation Services

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

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

Visitors and Volunteers

WDMCS welcomes visitors and volunteers to its school buildings. Visitors are individuals who come to watch an assembly, eat lunch with their student, or visit their student’s classroom. Visitors usually arrange their visits 24 hours in advance with the classroom teacher and keep them brief. Visitors should not disrupt class or discuss individual concerns when students are present. Young children or visiting students must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Volunteers are individuals who offer their time to assist with school projects, support classroom activities, or serve on committees. Unlike visitors, volunteers are typically engaged by the school to help with specific tasks or programs. These opportunities include classroom assistance,

participation in building and activity support groups, and serving on districtwide or building committees. To learn more about volunteering, contact your school office. Volunteers may be required to complete additional screening. For more on volunteer background check requirements, visit <https://www.wdmcs.org/engage/volunteer>.

Both visitors and volunteers must use the front door, check in at the office, and pick up a visitor badge with each visit. Please bring personal identification, such as a state-issued ID, passport, military license, Consular ID card, or Permanent Resident card. Your ID will be screened through Raptor, and you'll state your location in the building to assist staff during emergencies. Those who do not pass the Raptor screening will not be admitted.

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

Websites

Valley Southwoods: <https://southwoods.wdmcs.org>

Valley High School: <https://valley.wdmcs.org>

Academics

Academic Honesty

Teachers assume students complete the work they submit. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously to maintain a fair system. These guidelines clarify what behaviors count as academic dishonesty:

- Obtaining and/or accepting a copy of a test or scoring device, or copying another student's answers during an exam.
- Giving another student answers or copies of exam questions.
- Having someone impersonate you or impersonating someone to help them academically.
- Submitting someone else's creative work as your own.
- Using notes or other unauthorized materials during a "closed book" exam.
- Copying another student's project and submitting it as your own.
- Having someone other than the student prepare an assignment or assessment for credit, or allowing another student to copy work, unless it is a teacher-approved collaborative effort.
- Using AI outside the teacher's instructions.
- Any other action to get credit for work that is not your own.
- Changing grades.

Advisory Program

The advisory program will help personalize students' educational experience. Students will receive materials and instruction on schoolwide initiatives such as social emotional learning, behavior expectations (*4CP-Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Continuous Learning and Professionalism*), climate and culture, surveys, student elections, and postsecondary planning.

Changing Schedules

Requests must be made on the [online schedule change request form](#) *only*. Phone calls and emails will not be accepted. Students may submit the schedule change request form only ONCE per semester, and only after speaking with their parent/guardian and counselor. The scheduling team will determine if the request meets the previously listed reasons to change a schedule. **Placement in a course requires space availability and must not exceed the class cap as determined for each course.**

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

The following are the only acceptable reasons for a change:

1. An approved level change (i.e. moving from Chemistry B to Chemistry A)
2. Computer and/or clerical error (i.e. having two classes scheduled during the same period)
3. Adding a course to meet graduation requirements
4. Adding a course to replace an open period
5. Adding a college entrance requirement
6. Dropping a course
7. When deemed necessary as part of a safety plan

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

Class Rank

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

DMACC Concurrent Enrollment

WDMCS offers the opportunity for high school students to earn college credits through concurrent enrollment with Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). The program offers no-cost college credit classes for WDMCS students. Learn more at <https://www.dmac.edu/highschoolstudents/index.html>.

Dropping a Course

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

Students typically have only the first 10 days of a semester to drop a course without academic consequences. If a student drops a class on or before the last day of first-quarter or third-quarter, a "W" for withdrawal will appear on the student's permanent transcript. Please view specific guidelines online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/drop-add-course>. School counselors work with students during registration to find the best course schedule to meet student needs.

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

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

Effective Grading Practices

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

Read more about Effective Grading Practices online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/assessments>.

End of Semester Guidance

If a student is going to be absent at the end of a semester, communication with the classroom teacher will occur so the student, teacher, and family can coordinate a plan for how the student will demonstrate their end of semester learning.

Grade Classification

Students acquiring 10-18 credits at the conclusion of their Freshman (9th grade) year will be identified as Sophomore (10th grade), 19-27 credits for Junior (11th grade), and 28+ credits for Senior (12th grade) year. This credit progression is in alignment with achieving a High School Diploma. Please reference [Board Policy 505.05 Graduation Requirements](#). Exceptions may be made via an administrative decision.

Graduation Requirements

West Des Moines students now have two options for earning a diploma. The traditional 48-credit diploma or the core 36-credit diploma. See board policy below for more information.

- [Board Policy 505.05: Student Graduation Requirements](#)

NCAA Eligibility Center

If a student wishes to participate in Division I or Division II athletics in college, they must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Registration can be done at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3>. Students will need to send a transcript at the time of registration and another following graduation. The NCAA reserves all rights in determining student eligibility. A copy of the guidelines is available in the Counseling Office.

Pass/No Pass (P/NP)

Students will have the opportunity to choose one Pass/No Pass course per semester, provided it is not a required course or offered for DMACC credit. No course that can meet a graduation

requirement can be taken Pass/No Pass until that graduation requirement is completed. Credit may be earned on a Pass/No Pass basis. Students will be expected to obtain a parent/guardian's signature for approval plus the signatures of their counselor and instructor to indicate their awareness of the student's intentions. View full details online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/pass-no-pass>.

Resource Opportunities

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

Valley Southwoods

- Students can request to meet with a teacher before school from 7:45-8:20 a.m. and after school from 3:20 until 3:45 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday, Fridays.
- Valley Southwoods has a closed campus policy. Students must be in attendance for the entire school day. All students must show a school identification card upon entering the building at the South main entrance.

Valley High School

- Academic Support After School Program (ASAP), 3:30-4:45 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday.

Silver Cord Award

The purpose of the Silver Cord program is to encourage volunteerism and allow students to experience the joy of giving back to the community. Volunteering can provide a constructive use of time, foster the exploration of career interests, support youth seeking employment and college admission, and give new graduates the confidence to serve in leadership roles after high school. All high school students are encouraged to participate regardless of their GPA, rigor of course study, and artistic or athletic ability. The Silver Cord Award is available to seniors who volunteer 200 hours between 9th and 12th grades. To earn a Silver Cord, students should plan on volunteering a minimum of 50 hours a year at three or more non-profit organizations, events, or programs during all four years of high school.

Students can review guidelines and complete the online application to acquire their Silver Cord account. This can be found on the WDMCS Community Education website at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/silver-cord>.

Student Conduct

Cell Phones and Communication ([Board Policy 503.09: Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#))

The use of personal electronic devices is not permitted during instructional time and assessments. The expectation for personal electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, etc.) is that they are silenced, not visible, and in the student's backpack, locker, or voluntarily turned into the teacher. Students may be permitted to use personal electronic devices during lunch and passing periods. Violations For a student's first violation of this policy, the student will be directed

to put the device away. Potential responses to subsequent violations include, but are not limited to: redirection, requirement to turn in the device, conference with parent/guardian, and disciplinary action in accordance with board policies.

The district is not responsible for the loss, theft, or destruction of personal electronic devices brought onto school, or district property, or while the student is attending district or school-sponsored events.

Closed Campus: Valley High School

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

Identification Cards

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

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

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

Lockers

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

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

1. The Media Center is open from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. for a quiet studying environment.
2. The Cafeteria Commons is located in the lobby area outside the cafeteria. It is open before and after school. During lunch, the students may be in the cafeteria or the courtyard outside of the cafeteria.
3. Once a student is in the Media Center/Cafeteria (during lunch) and the tardy bell has rung, the student is expected to remain in that area.
4. Utensils, dishes, and trays must remain in the cafeteria. Food and beverages of any kind are not to be taken to the Cafeteria Commons.

Media Center and Forum (Valley Southwoods)

1. The Media Center is open from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Students must have a pass to go to the media center.
2. The Forum is open beginning at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast is served beginning at 7:50 a.m. The academic wing of the building opens at 8:05 a.m. Students should not be in the academic wing prior to 8:05 a.m. unless under the direct supervision of a staff member.
3. During lunch, students must stay in the Forum until the bell rings and use the restrooms in that area.
4. Utensils, dishes, and trays must remain in the cafeteria. Food and beverages of any kind are not to be taken out of the Forum.
5. Students are expected to return trays/silverware/etc. and pick up all garbage/clean their tables every day. Students who do not follow cafeteria expectations will be required to complete community service time in the cafeteria.

Parking Regulations

Valley Southwoods Parking Regulations

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

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

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

Valley Southwoods Student Parking

Places where students CAN park:

- between two white lines

Places where students CANNOT park (restricted areas):

- Visitor parking
- Accessible parking
- Staff parking (designated by green lines and numbers)

- Fire lanes
- Self-created parking spots
- Bus concourse

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

Valley High School Parking Regulations

Valley students in all grades may drive their vehicles to school. To park your vehicle at Valley, you must fill out a parking form each year. *Seniors and juniors* are eligible for a parking hangtag to park in one of Valley's five parking lots. *Parking hang tags are given on a first come, first served basis until the lot is at capacity.* The parking form asks for the following information:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Valley High School Student Parking

Places where students CAN park:

- Between two yellow lines

Places where students CANNOT park (restricted areas):

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

Students who are parked in restricted areas or whose vehicle does not contain a valid parking tag may be subject to a parking ticket issued by the parking office. *Students with repeat violations may be subject to discipline or towing.*

WDMCS seeks to cultivate a culture of belonging and inclusion. All students parking on school property are expected to adhere to [Board Policy 502.03: Student Expression and Student Publication Code](#).

Appeal Procedure

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

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

Public Displays of Affection

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

School Dances

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

For Homecoming, only students currently enrolled in a high school are eligible to attend. No one older than 18 and out of high school is eligible to attend.

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

Social Media

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

Student Dress and Appearance ([Board Policy 502.01: Student Appearance](#))

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

- Students are asked to dress appropriately for the weather, including coats, hats, gloves, and boots. Any family who needs support in obtaining clothing or shoes should contact the school office.
- Shoes must be worn at all times for student safety.
- Clothing or other apparel promoting products illegal for use by minors or displaying obscene material, profanity, or reference to prohibited conduct are not allowed. If worn, a student will be asked to change or be given something different to wear for the day.

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

Study Hall

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

Restorative Practices and Discipline

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

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

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

What are Restorative Practices?

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

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

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

Student Behavior That May Result in Discipline

Disruption to the Educational Environment

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

When a student uses profanity, vulgar language, racial or discriminatory language, and/or indecent gestures toward another individual, they are not demonstrating respect and are also impacting the educational learning environment. These actions are not allowed and may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in [Board Policy 502](#), [Board Policy 503](#) and [Board Policy 503.01](#).

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

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

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

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

Inciting a Riot or Disturbance

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

Students who record a fight or otherwise continue to promote a physical fight or assault may also face disciplinary action. Law enforcement may become involved, as needed.

Theft — Stealing and/or Possession of Stolen Property

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

Trespassing

According to [Board Policy 501.11](#), a person who is found in or on school property after having been notified or requested by a school official to refrain from entering or remaining on school property will be considered trespassing.

Use and/or Possession of Tobacco and Tobacco Products

According to [Board Policy 503.01: Discipline](#), students in possession of or using tobacco products, including vapor/electronic tobacco products, while on school property, using school-provided transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity, are subject to discipline. Students under the age of 21 will be reported to local law enforcement authorities (Senate File 2268).

School officials may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, student desks, student backpacks (or any other container used by a student for holding or carrying personal belongings of any kind), student work areas, student electronic devices, or student automobiles to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment and protect the safety and welfare of students, school personnel and others on school premises or at school-sponsored activities. For more information, please reference [Board Policy 502.08: Search and Seizure](#).

Vandalism

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

Disciplinary Actions Overview

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

Detention

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

- **Saturday School Detention (Valley Southwoods only):** One form of detention occurs on Saturdays instead of after school. They may be assigned because it provides an extended period of time for the student to work on classroom assignments under the supervision of a staff member. If a student misses the detention, they may either be reassigned to a different Saturday School date or serve an in-school suspension during the week.
 - Valley Southwoods: 8-10 a.m.
- **ASAP (After School Assistance Program, Valley High School only)** Teachers and administrators can assign students to ASAP for extra help, makeup work and tests, and/or detention on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:30-4:45 p.m.. It is expected that there be a call home to parents or to conference with the student if they have transportation after school to attend ASAP.

In-School/Out-Of-School Suspension

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

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

Healthy Lifestyles/Four Oaks Chemical Dependency Programming

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

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

Long Term Suspension/Expulsion Proceedings

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

1. The student will be informed that long term suspension/expulsion proceedings will be recommended.

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

Safety and Health

Safety

Bicycles/Rollerblades/Roller Shoes/Scooters/Skateboards

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

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

Communicating Student Safety Concerns

WDMCS is committed to fostering an equitable and affirming learning environment in which each student and staff is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. Harassment and bullying of students is against the policy of the State of Iowa as well as of the District. The District will promote procedures and practices to reduce and eliminate harassment and bullying. The District prohibits harassment and bullying of students by other students, by employees, and by volunteers while in school, on school property, and at any school function or school-sponsored activity regardless of location. This includes harassment or bullying based on any student's actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including, but not limited to, the student's actual or perceived age, race, color, creed, national origin, sex, physical or mental ability or disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, physical attributes, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status.

Because we prioritize creating a healthy learning environment for each student, we want to know if a student experiences or perceives bullying or harassment. Please reach out to your student's teacher, counselor, or school administrator to express your concerns. If you do not believe these steps resolved the situation, a helpful next step is to submit a complaint form. This form can be found in [Board Policy 502.02, Anti-Bullying/Harassment](#).

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

Safety Drills

WDMCS conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of emergency protocols and procedures. Each school in our district performs severe weather, active threat, evacuation, ELF (Evacuate, Lockdown, Fight), and fire drills. Special assistance will be provided for students needing specific supports. For more information, visit www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/operations/school-safety.

Severe Weather Warnings

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

Security

Electronic locks have been installed on all school exit doors. The purpose of the security system is to allow controlled access to the building. Visitors and late-arriving students will need to come to the front doors and use the intercom system to gain entrance. Under no circumstances should anyone allow an unknown or unauthorized person to enter through any other door. Students should never open an exterior door for anyone, even if they know the person.

Health

Absences (Reasons)

Regular attendance is a very important part of your child's education. Children should be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol or ibuprofen. **If your child is ill, please call the school office before the start of the school day, email swattendance@wdmcs.org, or enter the absence in Infinite Campus.**

Students should stay home if they have:

- Diarrhea (must be diarrhea free in the 24 hours prior to returning to school)
- Fever (over 100.4) within the last 24 hours
- An illness that caused vomiting two or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is known to be caused by a condition that's not contagious
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been started. Impetigo is a skin infection with erupting sores usually under the nose or in the lip area. This drainage is generally described as "a golden crust".
- Conditions that suggest the possible presence of a more serious illness, including a fever, rash, sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability, or difficulty breathing
-

You can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by keeping your child home from school until the illness can no longer be spread to others.

Services of the School Nurse

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

Student Injuries

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

Health Fact Sheets

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

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox
- Bed Bugs
- Fifth Disease
- Head Lice
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mono
- MRSA
- Pink Eye
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat

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

Health Records

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

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

- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Board Policy 506.01: Student Records](#)

Immunizations and Health Screenings

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

To support healthy students, Iowa's health screening programs are regulated by the state and are implemented by the schools. These screenings include: immunizations, dental, vision, and lead. Hearing screenings are also conducted by audiologists from the Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) annually for students in grades pre-K, 1 and 5. Please notify your school nurse prior to the communicated screening dates if you would not like your student to participate. Further information regarding school screenings can be found on our website and will be provided by your school nurse. <https://discover.wdmcs.org/health-resources>

- [Learn more online from Iowa Department of Education: Student Health Requirements.](#)
- [Learn more online about immunizations, health screenings, including dental, hearing, and vision screenings.](#)

Medication Guidelines

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

Non-Prescription Medications

The WDMCS health offices stock non-prescription medications including Tylenol, ibuprofen, and Tums.

- All elementary school students (grades PK-6) will be provided a maximum of 4 doses of stock non-prescription medications during the school year.
- All junior high and high school students (grades 7-12) will be provided a maximum of 8 doses of stock non-prescription medications.
- Cough drops may be supplied by the parent/guardian but will not be provided as a stock medication.
- If further doses are necessary after the maximum number has been reached, the parent/guardian will be responsible for providing the medication to the health office and a doctor's note may be requested by the school nurse.

Emergency Response in Opioid Overdose

WDMCS maintains a stock opioid antagonist (Naloxone) available at all times during emergency responses. There has been a substantial increase in the number of opioid overdoses nationwide and across Iowa and this change will allow us to provide a safe environment for our students, staff, and visitors. In order to provide an emergency response to those that are at risk of a potentially life-threatening opioid overdose, all buildings (with students present) will have the medication available, and it will be stored/maintained by the school nurse. School nurses and trained personnel are authorized to administer the opioid antagonist to a student or individual if the school nurse and/or authorized personnel reasonably and in good faith believe the student or individual is having signs and symptoms of an acute opioid overdose. More information is available through [Board Policy 507.06: Stock Prescription Medication Supply - Naloxone](#).

Counselors

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

Students may visit with any of the counselors. At Valley, the counselors' offices are located across the hall from student services. At Southwoods, the counseling offices are to the left of the main entrance of the building. Teachers are encouraged to refer students to their counselor and parent/guardians may request special conferences. Students are encouraged to schedule a conference with their counselor. Learn more at <https://valley.wdmcs.org/learning/counseling-office>.

Sexual Assault Support

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

For more specific information, please reference [Board Policy 502.02: Anti-Bullying/Harassment \(Discrimination and Harassment Based on Sex Prohibited\)](#).

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

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

WDMCS partners with Employee and Family Resources for the Student Assistance Program. If you would like support with family or school issues, make an appointment by calling please call 515-244-6090 at any time or visit efr.org/how-we-help/student-assistance-program.. A counselor can listen and help you schedule an appointment. Problem assessment sessions are free, and if you need further services, your counselor will refer you to an appropriate, affordable resource.

School-based therapy services *are* available at each school, so *students* can see a licensed therapist *in person or virtually without leaving* campus. Families enroll students in these services and are responsible for costs, except for Hazel Health, which is a free telehealth resource. For more information about school-based therapy, contact the school counselor or principal.

Special Section — West Des Moines Community Schools Districtwide Handbook

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

Board of Education
Superintendent's Cabinet

General Information

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West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation

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Annual Notices and Board Policies

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

West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education

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

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

Seven elected members serve four-year terms without pay on the School Board. Elections are held in odd-numbered years. A new president and vice president are elected every November. In addition, up to three high school students are elected each spring to serve their senior year as non-voting members. View current Board of Education information online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/board>.

West Des Moines Community Schools Learning Resource Center

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

Superintendent's Cabinet

Dr. Matt Adams, Superintendent
Kurt Subra, Chief Financial Officer
Brian Abeling, Executive Director of Information and Technology
Bryan Geelan, Executive Director of Communications
Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Culture and Access
Michelle Lettington, Executive Director of Elementary Education
Steven Schappaugh, Executive Director of Secondary Education

TBA, Chief Human Resources Officer

General Information

Area Education Agency (AEA) Services

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

West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation

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

The Foundation began in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit organization that works closely with the school administration, staff, and community to provide resources for students. It strives to encourage student participation, creative teaching, and community-school partnerships by making funds available to all schools in the district. Learn more about the WDMCS Foundation online at www.wdmcsfoundation.org.

Departments

Business Services

Strong financial management and high-quality facilities play a key role in supporting learning in our classrooms. The department works with community representatives and staff to ensure our buildings and funding support student learning. The department oversees the district's budget, manages accounting, and generates financial reporting to provide transparency to its stakeholders. Learn more about WDMCS budgets online at discover.wdmcs.org/business-office.

Nutrition Services

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

Operations

Operations provides maintenance and custodial services for more than 1.5 million square feet of space, including more than 500 classrooms. It also provides services that support the delivery of education to our students. Learn more about operations online at discover.wdmcs.org/operations.

Transportation

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

- Students in grades K-8 living more than two (2) miles from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence. The area inside two (2) miles is the walk zone.
- Students in grades 9-12 living more than three (3) miles away from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence. The area inside three (3) miles is the walk zone.

- Capped out students, who are students transferred by the district to a school other than their designated attendance center. This may occur due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., part of a safety plan).
- Students experiencing homelessness, even if they move outside district boundaries.

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

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

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

Students are expected to remain seated, obey the driver, and maintain a safe, quiet environment at all times. Violations result in a Bus Conduct Report and corrective action, escalating from parent notification to loss of riding privileges. Serious misconduct (such as fighting, vandalism, or endangering safety) may result in administrative intervention or suspension of transportation services.

For more detailed information on transportation, including registration, payments, and bus conduct, visit discover.wdmcs.org/transportation.

Communications

Communications supports WDMCS district-wide and school-specific communication. From weather alerts and crisis notifications to event reminders and sharing student success stories, the communications department provides timely, relevant information to district staff, students, families, and the broader community. This department also manages the academic and activities brands.

When school must be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early because of weather conditions or other emergencies, the communications department works to inform district families and staff in a timely manner. Learn more about the communications department at discover.wdmcs.org/communications.

Community Education

Community Education supports and serves students, families, and the community through classes, the Kids West before- and after-school childcare program, intercultural outreach, service opportunities, and facility rentals. Learn more about the opportunities available through Community Education at communityed.wdmcs.org.

Culture and Access

The WDMCS Culture and Access department builds communities of care and ensures all in our system can access resources and opportunities. The department champions a supportive work environment, authentic school-family-community collaboration, and equitable experiences for each human we serve. Learn more about the department and contacts at discover.wdmcs.org/culture-and-access.

Human Resources

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

- recruiting quality and diverse staff members
- supporting professional development and training
- fostering an engaging and caring work environment

Human resources leads a talented group of individuals who support more than 1,900 employees, district substitutes, and a retiree recognition program. Learn more about the human resources department online at discover.wdmcs.org/human-resources. View career opportunities online at discover.wdmcs.org/careers.

Teaching and Learning Services

WDMCS offers a comprehensive education with variety, depth, and rigor in the following areas:

Curriculum

WDMCS curricula are based on proven, research-based strategies. Teachers endeavor to implement these strategies and skills that reflect the ever-changing technology and cultural shifts in our society, as well as the needs of our learners. The Director of K-12 Curriculum and their team provide critical leadership, expertise, and curricula guidance in WDMCS.

Multilingual Program

The WDMCS Multilingual Program supports K-12 multilingual learners and authentic school-family partnerships. Staff collaborates to prioritize the cultural wisdom of English Learners. They provide comprehensive opportunities to support students’ academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary success.

All students are required to fill out a Home Language Survey when enrolling in school in the state of Iowa. If a student’s primary, most-used, or first-learned language is something other than English, the student will be screened for possible language services. Learn more about ESOL services online at discover.wdmcs.org/ESOL.

Gifted/Talented (GT) Program

The WDMCS Gifted/Talented Program is a comprehensive K-12 program designed to identify and serve students who possess outstanding abilities, talents, and potential for high performance when compared with same-aged peers, and who require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. In addition to differentiated classroom experiences, students meet in small groups in their own buildings with specially-trained teachers to work on group and individual projects according to their needs, abilities, and interests. Learn more about GT at discover.wdmcs.org/gifted-talented.

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

WDMCS ensures children and youth experiencing homelessness have equitable access to the same free, appropriate public education. “Youth who are experiencing homelessness” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”);
 - Living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations;
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or

- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify if they are living in circumstances described above.
 - Includes youth who have run away or youth being forced to leave home.

Learn more about enrollment procedures and support services available online at discover.wdmcs.org/homelessness-resources.

Home Schooling

The WDMCS Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) has offered support to families who wish to educate their children at home since the early 1990s. Today, approximately 500 home-schooled students are enrolled in grades K-12. Teacher-assisted and enrichment classes like writing, science, physical education, Spanish, drama, and art are provided to supplement parents' home schooling efforts. Additionally, a wide array of field trips are provided throughout the year. Learn more about home schooling opportunities online at discover.wdmcs.org/HSAP or visit www.wdmcs-hsap.org.

Special Education

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

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

Families who move to the district and enroll a child with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will find similar student-focused programming and services at each of our schools. Learn more about Special Education support services online at discover.wdmcs.org/special-education.

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

WDMCS strives to create a technology-rich environment for its entire learning community.

Students in grades K-12 receive a Chromebook for educational purposes. District-provided technology resources exist solely for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policy, as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Chromebooks are the property of WDMCS. Students should have no expectation of privacy related to content created, websites searched, or documents saved.

Chromebooks provide integration with Google tools such as Docs, Sheets, and Slides, as well as the Canvas Learning Management System. WDMCS uses Google services including Gmail, YouTube, Google Earth, and Google Maps. Access is also granted to Google Gemini. If you would like to restrict your student's internet access to not include services like YouTube, please email your building principal to make the request.

Learn more about WDMCS technology services, including frequently asked questions, student and family Chromebook responsibilities, and details on the district's partnership with web-filtering and online safety vendor, Securly, at discover.wdmcs.org/technology-department.

Annual Notices and Board Policies

Annual Notices

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

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

- [502.02 Anti-Bullying/Harassment](#)
- [503: Discipline Of Students Who Make Threats Of Violence Or Cause Incidents Of Violence](#)
- [503.01 Discipline](#)
- [503.09: Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#)



3550 Mills Civic Parkway | West Des Moines, IA 50265

515-633-5000 | www.wdmcs.org

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