

Westfield Virtual School Handbook

2021-2022



“Welcome to the Future of Education”

Westfield Virtual School
18 Broad Street Westfield, MA 01085
(413) 564-9572

Check out our website at <https://www.schoolsofwestfield.org/o/wvs>

WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org>

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Translation Statement: If you need assistance understanding this information, please contact your building principal to arrange translation services.

ARABIC: إذا تحتاج مساعدة لفهم هذه المعلومات، الرجاء الاتصال بمدير المدرسة لتقديم خدمات الترجمة

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RUSSIAN: Если Вы нуждаетесь в переводе, пожалуйста, сообщите директору школы, и школа обеспечит вас переводчиком.

SPANISH: Si Ud. necesita ayuda para entender esta información, favor de comunicarse con el Principal para los servicios de traducción.

SWAHILI: Kama unahitaji usaidizi katika kuelewa taarifa hii, tafadhali wasiliana na kinara wako wa jengo ili akupangilie huduma za tafsiri.

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TWI: S1 wo hi a boaf04 a 4te as1m yi ase1 me pawoky1w fr1 wo panyin a 4tete wo na mo nyeh1 nkyer1 ase1 som

UKRAINIAN: Якщо Вам необхідний переклад даної інформації, будь ласка, повідомте директору школи, і школа забезпечить вас перекладачем.



Westfield Virtual School
18 Broad Street
Westfield, MA 01085
(413) 564-9572

Dear Westfield Families,

Welcome to the Westfield Virtual School! We are extremely happy that you have chosen our school for your child's education.

Our mission here at WVS is to ensure that all of our virtual students receive the highest quality of education and have a truly remarkable and positive experience with us here at the WVS.

We hope the information provided in this handbook will help you to gain an understanding of the general policies and practices followed in our school. For more precise statements of formal School Committee policies, you should review the Policy Book on file at central offices.

Currently, we enroll students who live in the Westfield School District and who are in grades K-8. The education we provide is fully virtual (online), and we also hold social events for our students and families throughout the year. Students who are enrolled at the WVS have access to all extra-curricular opportunities like any other Westfield student and they may participate in athletic teams as well.

We are very proud to be able to offer this excellent opportunity of high quality virtual learning to the students of Westfield, and we are excited to embark on this new adventure.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have. We are looking forward to the 2021-2022 school year!

Sincerely,

Thomas Osborn, Ed.D.

Principal

(413)-564-9572

thomas.osborn@schoolsofwestfield.org

Philosophy and Mission:

Westfield Virtual School's philosophy is every student will get exactly what they need each and every day. We aim to provide the highest quality of education to all our virtual students. Our school is specifically designed to provide a stimulating learning environment that supports the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of every child in a virtual landscape. In this engaging environment, students learn through rigorous and exciting virtual experiences that encourage active participation in learning. Teachers guide, support, and when needed, directly teach our children developmentally appropriate academic and social skills. Our aim is to build a community of learners by providing children with enriching virtual experiences to develop self-confidence, independence and strong cognitive and social skills. We respect the dignity, worth and individuality of each student and are committed to helping them achieve their full potential. Our students learn virtually and will attain the skills needed to be successful in any endeavor that they wish to undertake. The Westfield Virtual School recognizes the significant relationship among teachers, students, parents, and families and encourages continuous collaboration in a climate of mutual respect, cooperation and shared responsibility. Welcome to the future of education... welcome to the Westfield Virtual School!

Our Virtual School Program:

The Westfield Virtual School offers classes for students from Kindergarten to the 8th grade and these classes include both typically developing children as well as children with disabilities. These virtual classrooms offer children the opportunity to work and connect with age-appropriate peers as well as children with developmental challenges. Children with disabilities excel in many areas, affording all children the opportunity to be models in some realm. As students work in virtual group activities with their peers and teachers, they discover their similarities and develop a better understanding of their differences. Flexible, but consistent, structure and routine are offered, including virtual learning activities designed to promote language/listening skills, gross and fine motor development, and opportunities for imaginative/dramatic play. A wide variety of developmentally appropriate virtual materials and activities are employed, all of which support a strong foundation for learning.

Entrance Requirements:

The following requirements must be met to enroll a child in school:

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to enroll their child in the Westfield Virtual School must be a resident of Westfield, and therefore eligible for enrollment in the Westfield Public School district (we do not currently enroll school choice students).
2. A parent/guardian must fill out the virtual school registration form currently available on the district website.
3. The student must currently be in grades Kindergarten through the 8th grade.

The Curriculum:

The Westfield Virtual School curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students work virtually both alone and in small groups where teachers facilitate the children's interactions with each other and their environment. Teachers observe each student's activities in order to tailor and expand the virtual curriculum to meet individual needs and interests. Teachers encourage parents to maintain close communication with staff, and work closely with parents to develop strategies for dealing with specific issues.

Assessment:

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality education programs. Assessment is important to understand and support student's development. It is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively the Westfield Virtual School is meeting young children's educational needs, and to inform on program improvement.

Students do not just grow in size. They develop, evolve, and mature, mastering ever more complex understandings of the people, objects, and challenges in their environment. There is a general pattern or sequence for development that is true of most children. However, the rate, character, and quality of development vary from child to child. Culture can also influence development in different ways, and the goals for children can differ from culture to culture.

Quality assessment looks at not only what is happening within the child, but also to the care that the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

Typical Daily Schedule:

Daily virtual activities and lessons include a variety of active and quiet individual and group projects. A typical day may consist of the following: morning meeting, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies work, elective classes, and asynchronous activities and assignments.

Highly Qualified Staff:

Each classroom is staffed with a teacher, who is appropriately certified through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Additional staff members include an Paraprofessionals, an Autism Consultant/Behavior Analyst, ABA Staff,

Speech/Language Pathologists, an Occupational Therapist, a Physical Therapist, a School Adjustment Counselor, a School Psychologist, and a Registered Nurse.

Communication with Staff:

Communication between school and home is the foundation of a child's success. Ongoing communication will benefit the child and family in several ways. It will:

- create feelings of acceptance and partnership
- create trust
- build confidence
- foster appreciation of teachers and caregivers
- lay the groundwork for resolving issues

When families are actively engaged in frequent conversations, it's much easier to talk about the ups and downs of a child's development.

Communication can be verbal, in person/virtual, on the telephone and via e-mail. We ask parents to ensure that their contact information is up to date including their email address so that they can stay informed of important events and issues pertaining to their child(ren). The Westfield Virtual School will periodically send out email reminders and updates to parents. E-mail addresses will be used for informational purposes only and will not be forwarded to third parties.

Because families are unique, each will have communication preferences. Please share with your child's teacher your preferred method of communication.

To open communication lines, relationships must be:

- *Respectful*, a process of listening as well as talking
- *Reciprocal*, a give-and-take that includes all family members
- *Inclusive* of all family needs (translation of materials when appropriate)
- *Thoughtful*, including detailed information about the child

Newsletters:

Teachers will communicate classroom activities and events through students' Google Classrooms. Parents should check their child's Google Classroom regularly to stay updated. Newsletters may be sent directly to the email address that parents/guardians have on file with us. Many notices and calendar events will be posted on the Westfield Virtual School website as well.

Conferences and Meetings:

Parent conferences are offered in the fall and spring of each year, on days set by the district. During the fall conference the teacher will report on the child's social emotional development and the results of baseline assessments. With the teacher's support, the parents will provide

expectations for the child's growth over the school year. The spring conference will focus on student growth and learning outcomes. Conferences may be initiated by the parents or the teacher at any time during the year.

Confidentiality:

The Westfield Virtual School's work with children and families will sometimes bring us into contact with confidential information. We will respect the privacy of children and their parents and guardians, while ensuring that they access high quality early education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all families can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

We will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Families will only have access to the files and records of their own children
- Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents or guardian of that child, except for the purposes of curriculum planning or group management, including medical concerns.
- Staff will not discuss individual children with staff from other settings a child may be in without written release.
- All volunteers or observers at the school are made aware of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.

For information regarding student records and procedures for accessing records see the district policy.

General Information

Calendar:

The Westfield Virtual School follows the Westfield Public School District's academic calendar, which can be found on both the district and school websites as well as in this handbook.

Delayed Opening of School:

Whenever possible, a delay of two hours will be used in lieu of closing for the full day. In rare instances, we may change a delay into a cancellation if conditions worsen in the early morning hours. Therefore, please monitor television and radio stations until your student's departure for the most up-to-date information.

Attendance:

Regular and prompt attendance from the very first day of school is important to your child. School attendance is critical to student success.

- Exposure to Language: School exposes children to language-rich environments they may not have at home.
- Time on Task: Students who miss too much school fall behind and have a hard time catching up.
- Persistence: Good attendance builds habits essential for success in school and life.

If your child is going to be absent for in-school learning, please notify the school. To ensure the safety of our students, the Westfield Virtual School uses an absentee call back system. Daily calls will go out to parents of students whose absence was not called into the school.

If your child contracts a contagious illness, a doctor's note is required to attend school outings, social events, and field trips. It is very important for parents to keep the school informed of any changes to phone numbers (work, home, cell phones and emergency contacts), address, daycare schedules, etc. During an emergency situation, time is crucial so current data is essential to make sure your child arrives home safely.

Bus Safety (if busses are used for Outings/Socials/or Field Trips) During the COVID Pandemic:

- All students who enter the bus must wear a mask and keep it on for the duration of the bus ride.
- Each child will be assigned his/her own seat following social distancing protocols.
- Cameras will monitor student behavior to ensure all students remain safe.
- Busses will be wiped down between runs and disinfected at the end of each day.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival: Any child who logs into their virtual classes at the Westfield Virtual School more than 5 minutes after their designated start time, is considered to be tardy and this will be recorded as such in our system.

Dismissal: Parents are expected to inform the school in advance when possible if an early dismissal is needed.

Clothing:

Children should attend virtual classes comfortably dressed in appropriate clothing. We encourage self-help skills in dressing, and therefore, appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your child is dressed in clothing that is both appropriate and manageable for a young child's coordination. For social outings, field trips, or similar events that the Westfield Virtual School may hold throughout the year, we will follow the District Face Covering Policy.

During these events, please mark **all** clothing and other belongings with your child's name. We would like to encourage closed toe shoes with a rubber sole for safety. Please avoid flip flops,

sandals, high heels or shoes without a back on them. Winter boots should be large enough for children to avoid struggling when putting them on.

School Conduct:

In all respects, we try to be clear and realistic in our expectations of the children. Each child is unique and we realize that they might be at a different step in their development. We try to use techniques that help them grow and that make them feel good about themselves. Setting reasonable, consistent limits is very important to children. Limits let children know what is expected of them and this gives them a sense of safety and security. They let children know what behavior is all right and what behavior is not all right. The limits will vary from child to child and will vary for the same child over a period of time. The staff at Westfield Virtual School always tries to be positive and encouraging to the children. Whenever possible, we use do's instead of don'ts. Using do's instead of don'ts shows children acceptable ways to act... for example... Don'ts: "Don't shout over the microphone!" Do's: Do use, "inside voices." We also try to involve children in working through situations such as taking turns, sharing, working within limits, etc.. Accentuating positive behavior usually gets better results and makes children feel better about themselves than dwelling on less desirable behaviors. In the event that the behavioral strategies have been exhausted without a positive change, a new plan involving parents and the school would be formulated.

School Health:

The major goal of our school health program is to protect and promote the health of children within the school environment. School health records provide a confidential record of each child's health status.

The information that we gather about your child's health status enables us to identify children with special health care needs and to develop a health care plan that anticipates possible emergency situations.

The following information will be part of a student's Health Record:

- ◆ Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
- ◆ Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results. Each physical must be current (within 1 year).
- ◆ Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date.
- ◆ Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.

- ◆ Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
- ◆ Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, diabetes, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support). The school nurse in cooperation with the family and documents from the child's physician will complete a healthcare plan regarding the child's specific issue and ways to treat it. Individual healthcare plans will be reviewed on a regular basis or at least annually by the school nurse and the child's parent/guardian. The original care plan will be kept in the nurse's office.
- ◆ Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's religious beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

Student Illness and Exclusion From School (please also refer to the district COVID-19 policy):

Upon logging into their online classes, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child logged in poses an increased risk to the child, and also during our social events to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at school, parents, legal guardians, or another person authorized by the parent/guardian will be notified immediately and the child will log out of classes. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you and your authorized emergency contact person. In the meantime, if during a school sponsored social outing or field trip, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, he/she will be held, until dismissed, where new individuals will not be exposed.

Based on School Committee Policy the following exclusion practices for social outings and/or field trips will be followed:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher. Children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school and not taking any fever reducing medications.
- Diarrhea OR vomiting in the previous 24 hours.

- Bad cold or flu when there is excessive nose drainage or constant coughing.
- Rash that could be contagious; please have any rashes checked by your pediatrician. Child cannot return to school without an MD note of skin diagnosis.
- Diagnosed strep throat, impetigo or pink eye. Students may log out of their online classes from school until they have been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, however the child should continue to attend their online classes if they can
- If your child is diagnosed with scabies, he/she may log back in to online classes after 24 hours of treatment or as soon as they feel they are able to. A physician's written confirmation of treatment and non-infectious status is required for physical attendance at any social gathering or field trip in this case.
- If you suspect your child has lice – yellowish-gray, oval-shaped eggs that are “glued” to the hair shaft and they wish to attend social gatherings or field trips then your child must be checked by the school nurse after treatment upon arrival to the in-person activity.

Abuse/Neglect Reporting:

Public school staff members are mandated by law to report any signs of possible child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Behavior Management Plan:

The goal of discipline is to assist and guide the children in the development of self-control. Teachers will discipline in a consistent way, based on an understanding of varying developmental levels. Simple and understandable rules will be established so that expectations and limitations will be clearly defined. Discipline will be constructive in nature, including such methods as diversion, separating the child from the situation (example: a breakout room or separate online session), encouragement and reinforcements for appropriate behavior and effort.

Building Utilization:

The WVS is housed in-district, and it is where the teachers are teaching from each day. While we do not have students on-site, there may be times where it is needed for a student to come into the building such as for screenings, and perhaps SPED testing. Appointments will be arranged with the parents/guardians of the student directly.

Unusual Circumstances:

If there are any unusual circumstances at home, such as illness or death, parents' vacations, or changes in childcare arrangements (such as a new nanny or babysitter), please notify the teachers so that they can help your child adjust more easily to the situation.

SECTION II - DISTRICT POLICIES

The District Section is composed of district-wide policies. If any provisions of Section 1 are in conflict with Section 2, district policy shall prevail.

Below please find a brief description of some district-wide policies. To view the complete listing of policies located in the School Committee Policy manual please visit our website at www.schoolsofwestfield.org.
(District Section>>>School Committee>>>Policy Manual)

Administering Medicines to Students (File: JLCD) (File: JLCD-R)

This policy is designed to provide minimum standards for the safe and proper administration of medications to students in the Westfield Public Schools. Except as provided in this policy and its accompanying regulations, the Westfield School Committee prohibits the administration of any medication by school personnel, or the self-administration of any medication by any student.

Life Threatening Allergies (LTA) (File: JLCEA)

The Westfield Public Schools (WPS) understand that some students have life-threatening allergies and the WPS are committed to minimizing the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions. In order for the WPS to appropriately assist the student, parents/guardians must notify school administration (including the school nurse) about allergies and health issues with their children.

Athletic Concussion Policy (File: JJIF) (File: JJIF-R)

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities.

Policy Regarding Wellness (File: ADF) (File ADF-R)

The Westfield Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, health education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment.

Face Coverings (File: EBCA)

The Westfield Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the Districts ability to returning students to a full-time classroom learning experience.

Attendance Policy (File: JE)

The School Committee requires a high level of participation in engaged learning. Regular school and class attendance enables students to benefit from classroom discussions, presentations, and interactive activities

Bus Transportation (File: JICC)

The Westfield Public Schools provides free bus transportation for all eligible students in accordance with applicable laws. The authority of the school begins and ends at the bus stops, both in the morning and in the

afternoon. As such, all school rules apply to student activity during these times. Students who violate school rules may have their privilege to ride the school bus revoked in addition to any standard disciplinary action. If a student is suspended from riding the bus, it becomes the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to provide transportation to and from school.

Student Dress (File: JICA)

It is largely the responsibility of the student, with the guidance of parents, to determine what is appropriate dress for school or school related activities, however, the Westfield Public School system reserves the right to prohibit clothing or manner of dress which constitutes a health or safety concern or is so unusual as to be disruptive or distracting to the educational process.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation. Exempted from this policy are students requiring a medical and/or safety exemption as determined by the building principal in accordance with the District Face Covering Policy.

Student Fees, Fines, and Charges (File: JQ)

The Westfield School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. While no student will be denied access due to an inability to pay fees, all students will be required to remit charges and fines.

Responsible Digital Use Policy (File: IJNDB) (File: INJDB-E)

The Westfield Public School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool.

Student Discipline (File: JIC)

The Westfield School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated.

Student Interrogations, Searches, and Arrests (File: JIH)

The storage, on one's person, in one's belongings or in school property, of contraband such as, but not limited to, illegal substances or articles or any item prohibited by district policy or building rules, is strictly forbidden. Violations will result in confiscation of such materials. The student in violation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use by Students Prohibited (File JICH)

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids, or any controlled substance. The School Committee prohibits the use or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school property or at any school function.

Due Process for Suspensions from School

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

- The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident.
- If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.
- On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.
- The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

- Send proposed short-term suspension letter

- Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.
- Send short-term suspension determination letter

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year.

- Send proposed long-term suspension letter
- Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i) In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
 - ii) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
 - iii) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
 - iv) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
 - v) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.
- Send long-term suspension determination letter

- The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
- The Superintendent appeal hearing shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.
- Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue the Superintendent suspension determination letter. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H and 37H½

1. The due process procedures above do not apply to a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) an assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c.71, §§37H or 37H½.
2. The principal will inform the student of the specific charges in writing, informing the student of the right to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense) and the right to provide evidence and question witnesses, on the proposed hearing date.
3. The student may appeal the principal's expulsion determination to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) days of notification of the expulsion.

4. The superintendent may uphold, reduce, or reverse the disciplinary action after the appeal hearing. Note that a failure to make an appeal to the superintendent within the ten (10) day period will exhaust any further right of appeal.
5. All students who have been suspended or expelled who remain residents of the District shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities.
6. If the superintendent upholds the expulsion decision, if the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan.

Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs (File: IHAMB)

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

Bullying and Cyberbullying (File: JBA)

Bullying of any type is prohibited in the school setting or connected with the school setting as provided below. The Westfield Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Prohibition of Hazing (File: JICFA) (File: JICAF-E)

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location.

Policy Regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (students) (File: ACAC)

It is the policy of the Westfield Public Schools that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is forbidden, whether by students, school employees or third parties subject to the control of the board.

Physical Restraint of Students (File: JKAA) (File: JKAA-R)

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the Westfield Public School District. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations as a last resort and with extreme caution after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

Procedures Student Complaints and Grievances (File: JII-R)

The procedures apply only to situations not otherwise specifically provided by other district policy or procedure.

Student Privacy (File: JII-R)

In accordance with federal law, the Westfield Public Schools adopts, in consultation with parents, the following provisions related to student privacy.

Student Records (File: JRA) and File JRA-R)

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families.

Free Speech Policy (High Schools) (File: JFA)

The Westfield Public Schools recognize the free speech rights of high school students in the public schools.

Student Speech at Elementary and Middle Schools (File: JFAAA)

The Westfield Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to create an educational environment that encourages appropriate student expression and speech.

Parental Notification Law (File: IGAI)

The Westfield Public Schools will ensure that parents and/or guardians are afforded the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion of the human sexual education or human sexuality issues curriculum that is taught within the PreK-12 grade levels. Parents and/or guardians who wish to avail themselves of this flexibility shall do so through written notification to their child's school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.

Non-Custodial Parents Rights (File: KBBA)

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

Student Progress Reports to Parents (File: IKAB)

Parents are entitled to information concerning the progress of their child. The information shall emphasize the positive aspects of a child's progress in school indicating, therefore, what he/she has accomplished.

Student Assistance Program (File: IGB)

The goal of the district is to provide students needing educational supports with the opportunity to receive educational assistance within the general education program whenever possible.

English Language Learners (File: IHBEA)

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidelines.

Nondiscrimination (File: AC)

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential.

Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff (File: GBEC)

Under MGL c. 268A, public school teachers (and other public employees) are generally prohibited from accepting gifts valued at fifty dollars or more, unless that gift falls within certain exemptions. The State Ethics Commission recently created a new exemption for “class gifts” whereby a public school teacher may accept a class gift up to one hundred fifty dollars in value if a group of students and/or parents wish to pool their contributions towards a gift.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (File: ACC)

Under Section 504, a person with a disability is anyone who (a) has, (b) has a record of having or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing hearing, speaking, breathing, working and performing manual tasks and includes major bodily functions.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The requirements regarding special education are based upon state and federal law. The relevant laws are as follows:

- A. State Law: The state special education law, Section 28, popularly known as “Chapter 766” after the session law number under which it was passed in 1972, is contained in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) at Chapter 71B.
- B. The regulations implementing the statute are found in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR), 603 CMR, Section 28.00.
- C. Federal Law: The federal special education law is known as “IDEA” (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The statute is located in the United States Code (USC) at 20 U.S.C. §1400. In 1997,

Congress re-authorized the IDEA and the amended statute is popularly known as “IDEA-2004”.

Interim Alternative Educational Setting

Students may be assigned to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (I.A.E.S.) in accordance with the policy of the Westfield School Committee.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The Westfield Fire Department requires a standard evacuation procedure for all Westfield Public Schools. This procedure allows students to learn the evacuation procedure when they first enter the school and follow the same instructions until they leave the Westfield Public Schools.

Visitors and Parking

VISITORS: Our policy is to accept visitors who have legitimate business at school. Visitors and guests must register in the school office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors and guests must display, at all times, an appropriate identification badge assigned by the school office. Upon completion of their business all visitors and guests must sign out in the school office, return their badge and promptly leave the building.

PARKING REGULATIONS: Parents/guardians, students, and visitors should familiarize themselves with the parking regulations of the school and park in a legal parking space only. Violators will be subject to fines or towing of their vehicles. This applies to morning drop-off and after school pick-up as well as evening programs, workshops and conferences.

Summer Reading

The Westfield Public Schools remain committed to the improvement of reading, a primary component of the learning process. The goals of summer reading are to reinforce the habit of reading for pleasure, enrichment and gathering information. Research indicates that the more students read or listen to books, the better they will read. Research also indicates that students who do not read regularly throughout the summer lose reading skills that must be rebuilt once school begins again. Our expectation is that every student will read over the summer. Please refer to the Westfield Public School district webpage at www.schoolsofwestfield.org under Students for detailed information about summer reading.

Teacher Mailboxes

Teacher mailboxes are private and under no circumstances are students or visitors to REMOVE OR PUT ANYTHING in a teacher's mailbox.

Cancellation of School

There will be days when the Westfield Public Schools will be closed or have a delayed opening due to inclement weather, hazardous traveling conditions and/or other emergencies. We have a telephone notification system that will place calls to parents notifying them of closings, delays, or an early release. Please be sure that your student's contact information is up-to-date. The decision to close or not close school is made as early as possible to cancel all school transportation and lunch programs and to notify the media, traffic, and school personnel. On occasion, it may be wiser to have a two-hour delayed opening of school instead of closing for the full day. There may also be weather conditions that would necessitate the closing of school during normal school hours. Every child should know what to do and where to go in case of an early dismissal. If there is school during bad weather, the final decision concerning school attendance must rest with the individual parent.

Summary of Westfield Public Schools Safety Policies

Criminal Offender Registration (CORI): The Human Resources Office processes all CORI checks. The CORI will be utilized only for employment purposes and not disseminated to any other party. (Contact Human Resources Office) (File: ADDA)

Emergency Procedures: Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff. Schools must be prepared to respond immediately and responsibly to any combination of events which threaten to result in an emergency and/or disaster. (File: EBC)

Fire Safety: Building principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions. (File: EBC)

Identification of Students and Staff: A picture identification system enhances the control and management of the school system.

Injury Reports: All injuries must be reported to the classroom teacher/school nurse as soon as possible. The injury report form must be completed.

Inspections (Playgrounds, Buildings, Buses, Etc.): Regular inspection of buildings, grounds, facilities, equipment and buses to uncover hazards and/or dangerous conditions in an ongoing effort to address any safety concerns.

Westfield Police Department: The Westfield Police Department and the Westfield Public Schools are committed to safe schools. The parties agree to meet to collaborate and establish lines of communication to support a safe, secure school and community.

Reporting requirements to the Department of Children & Families: Any school official or employee shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect as required by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A. (File: JL)

Student Interrogations, Searches, and Arrests: The School Committee recognizes the right of students to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the School Committee and school officials to maintain order and discipline in the schools, thereby ensuring a positive educational environment. In furtherance of these duties, inspections and searches for prohibited and/or illegal substances or items may be conducted. (File: JIH)

Reporting Requirements to Law Enforcement: It is the policy of the Westfield Public Schools to cooperate with law enforcement and social service agencies in the interest of the larger welfare of all citizens. At the same time, Westfield Public Schools have a responsibility to parents/guardians for the welfare of the students while they

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - Model Notice for Directory Information

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Westfield Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Westfield Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised your student's building principal to the contrary in accordance with Westfield Public School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Westfield Public Schools to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).]

If you do not want the Westfield Public Schools to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify your child's school principal in writing by **September 14, 2021**. The Westfield Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information: Student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic team, degrees, honors, and awards received. Also, the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user
- A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2021-2022

August 25	New Teacher Opening Day
August 26 & 27	Staff Development Days
August 30	Schools open for grades 1-12
September 6	Labor Day Holiday/No School
September 7	First Day of Kindergarten & Fort Meadow Preschool
October 11	Columbus Day Holiday/No School
October 26	Early Release Day for Elementary Students Full Day for Secondary Students
Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences	
November 2	Staff Development Day/No School for Students
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday/No School
November 24-26	Thanksgiving Recess/No School
December 24-31	Holiday Recess/No School (schools reopen January 3, 2022)
January 17	Martin Luther King Day Holiday/No School
February 9	Early Release Day for Elementary Students (Full Day for Secondary Students) Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences
February 21-25	Winter Vacation/No School
March 11	Staff Development Day/No School
April 15	Good Friday/No School
April 18-22	Spring Vacation/No School
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday/No School
June 2	Westfield Technical Academy graduation ceremony
June 3	Westfield High School graduation ceremony
June 21	Last Day of School - early release for students *Includes 5 emergency closing day

**Last day will be June 14 (if no emergency closing days are used)

For every day not used, a day will be deducted from the calendar

Support Resources and Hotlines

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Dilmira Liquori, Police Department: 562-5411 extension 5

YWCA ARCH Program: 733-7100 (hotline) Shelter, counseling and information for battered women and their children, sexual assault services

New Beginnings: 562-5739 counseling and information

Safe Link 24-hours 877-785-2020

Psychiatric Services

Westfield Crisis Intervention Program: 568-6386 24-hour service for psychiatric crisis and suicidal behavior

Individual, group and family counseling for youth and families:

The Carson Center: 572-4132

James Levine and Association: 534-7400

MSPCC, Holyoke: 532-9466

Child and Family Services, West Springfield: 737-4718

Agawam Counseling Center: 786-6410

Substance Abuse Services

MASS Substance Abuse Information Helpline: 800-327-5050

Providence Hospital, Holyoke

- Clinical Assessment Center for outpatient services: 539-2973
- Clinical Assessment Center for inpatient services: 539-2981
- Bay State Medical Center, Central intake for inpatient and outpatient services: 794-555
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting schedule: www.westernmassaa.org or listed in your local paper
- Al-Anon and/or Alateen 782-3406/ 888-425-2666

Hotlines and Other Support Services

United Way: 737-2691

AIDS information and support: 800-235-2331

Missing children: 800-843-5678

National Runaway Switchboard (24 hours): 800-RUNAWAY

Department of Children and Families, Holyoke Office: 493-2600

Parental Stress Line: 800-632-8188

Western Mass Legal Services (Legal Aid): 781-7814