

Westtown-Thornbury Elementary School

Parent Handbook

2020-2021



Mrs. Pecorella, Interim Principal

750 Westbourne Road
West Chester, PA 19382
(484) 266 - 1802

Dear Westtown-Thornbury Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the entire staff, I want to welcome you to the 2020-21 school year! Despite the unusual times we find ourselves living in right now, we are eager to get the year started and to challenge students to achieve their personal best. An integral part of this process is creating a school environment that is safe and secure, especially this year as we continue to combat COVID-19. This handbook outlines key policies, procedures, and practices so that you can familiarize yourself and partner with us for a great year. As with many things in our life today, *please expect change and try to remain as flexible as possible*. We will try and keep this handbook updated but it is possible that guidance changes and there is a delay in the update.

The information serves as a compliment to the *Discipline and Records* booklet, which explains a variety of School Board policies in more depth and provides guidelines within which all schools can operate to meet the needs of their individual students. In addition to affirming receipt online when you completed the Back-to-School information, you can access a copy on the [district website](#). Please do not hesitate in contacting me if you have questions or concerns.


Unless it is an emergency situation, please contact your child's teacher if you have a specific question about his/her progress or a concern about something in class/school. If further clarification or assistance is needed, you can reach out to me.

Thank you, in advance, for your support this year.

Go Wildcats!

Mrs. Julie Pecorella, Interim Principal

[@WTE750](#)



*"Alone we can do
so little. Together
we can do so
much."*

Helen Keller

WCASD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the West Chester Area School District is to educate and inspire our students to achieve their personal best.

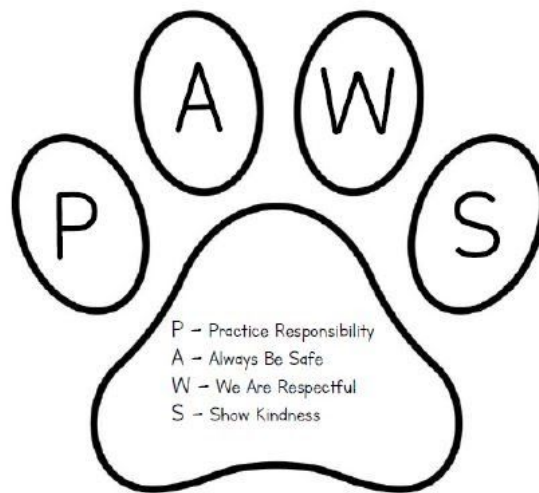
SCHOOL VISION

By 2020, WTE will be a model of 21st Century teaching and learning with continual opportunities for all students to demonstrate creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication in order to show growth and sustain high student achievement.

OUR CORE VALUES

The WTE Faculty & Staff are committed to focusing on the development of the whole child and has identified characteristics fundamental to lifelong success. Through our new Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) approach, we will define, model, and reinforce key characteristics with our four focus areas in all parts of the school and all times of the day. Help support our **Best PAWS Forward** initiative!

WILDCATS PUT
THEIR BEST



FORWARD!

SCHOOL PLEDGE

I pledge to put my best PAWS forward by practicing responsibility, being safe, being respectful, and being kind.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Secretary	Kelly Patterson	484-266-1802	Nurses Office	Jeanne Latimer , CSN Heather Mulusky, RN & Sandra Godin, RN	484-266-1806
Counselor	Peggy Blaher	484-266-1811	Caseworker	TBD	484-266-1820
Psychologist	Kelly Allen & Victoria Pisorski	484-266-1809	Attendance	Elizabeth Johannesen	484-266-1811
Safe Arrival:	Call to report absence.	484-266-1810	Fax		484-266-1899

HOURS OF OPERATION

Main Office: 7:45 AM - 4:15 PM
Teachers: 8:20 AM - 3:50 PM
Students (K-5): 9:10 AM - 3:40 PM

WCASD Half-Days: 9:10 AM - 12:10 PM
2 Hour Delay: 11:10 AM - 3:40 PM

CALLS TO SCHOOL

You are invited to call the school office (484-266-1802) regarding any matter during regular hours. We do not put calls through to a classroom unless a teacher is on planning and available to take the call. We recommend an email in advance to pre-arrange a time to talk.

Special Note: Since arrival and dismissal times are very busy, please avoid calling at these times unless it is an emergency. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

SCHOOL WIDE COMMUNICATION SOURCES

Website: School information, forms, staff email, teacher website links, PTO links, etc.

WTE on Twitter: Highlights classroom activities, special programs, and events

Individual teachers have websites and other communication tools such as Twitter. They are all listed on our school website ([Staff Tab](#)).

SPELLMAN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

782 Springdale Drive
Exton, PA 19341

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Parents and students are asked not to call the schools or administrative offices for information on school closings for inclement weather or other emergencies. We utilize automated contact via our School Messenger system and ask that you keep phone and email information updated.

Special Note: We provide the student who will be last off of each bus with a notecard or call his/her parent and give instructions to call WTE because someone remains at WTE until all busses have been cleared.

STUDENT MORNING DROP-OFF

Students being dropped-off in the morning should not arrive until **8:45 AM** unless registered with A Child's Place program or coming for a pre-arranged meeting with a teacher. Any student that arrives after 9:10 is considered tardy and must enter through the Main Office in order to get a pass for class. If late due to a medical appointment, please provide a note from the provider in order to mark it as excused. Eight (8) unexcused tardies will result in an unlawful absence per WCASD policy.

Procedure: Please view the entire document on our school website [[click here for arrival and departure traffic plan](#)].

Special Note: If your child needs assistance into the school with a project or large item, please plan to park and walk him/her to the Main Entrance. If you arrive after 9:10, you may access the bus loop and drop the student off at the Main Office.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

We strive to minimize classroom disruptions. If a forgotten item is brought to school late, we will alert the classroom teacher so the student can retrieve the item at a convenient time. To limit visitors into the building, we will have a collection table outside of the Main Office for drop-offs. We will have signage at the main entrance. Children who forget their lunch may charge lunch in the cafeteria or a lunch may be brought to school and dropped off at the Office (be sure the child's name and grade are on the lunch).

DRESS CODE

Proper dress is helpful to maintaining a positive learning environment. [WTE follows Board Policy 221AGI - Dress & Grooming](#). Parents are on the front line to ensure students come to school dressed appropriately and for the weather, with layers as the seasons change. Students go out for recess daily, unless it is raining or too cold, so a jacket or sweater is needed for the chillier days. Sneakers and socks are a must on physical education day. Girls should not wear spaghetti strap tops or tops that are too brief. Flip flops or other loose-fitting shoes are not permitted as they can be dangerous. Shorts and skirts should be a reasonable length. Also, t-shirts with inappropriate or offensive language are not appropriate. If any dress is deemed inappropriate, the student will be sent to the Main Office and a parent will be contacted to bring in a change of clothes.

TOYS/ELECTRONICS AT SCHOOL

Please remind students that the school is not a place for toys or electronic devices (i.e., iPads, cell phones, personal gaming devices, fidget spinners, or the latest fad, etc.). In addition to being expensive, they are disruptive to the educational environment if not a part of a planned activity. If you allow or need your child to carry a cell phone, we expect it to be *off and away in their backpack*. Any item that is out during the day will be confiscated. After a warning for a first offense, confiscated items will go to the office for parent pick-up. WTE cannot be responsible for overseeing these items at school. If a teacher wants to allow any of these items in school for an activity, a notice will be sent home with guidelines for parents.

LOST AND FOUND

To keep lost and found articles to a minimum, please mark your child's name on his/her belongings. Anything not claimed will go to an organization for the needy periodically throughout the year. Encourage your child to check the "lost and found" box/table near the cafeteria if you think something was left at school. Periodically, we lay everything out on tables, videotape what is displayed, and share it with parents in a last-ditch effort to match items to their owner.

VOLUNTEERING AT SCHOOL

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities offered to parents throughout the year and we welcome your participation. Due to COVID-19, there will be less in-school options. **Please note: *We are unable to allow younger siblings to join you when you are volunteering to work with our students.*** Some opportunities are offered by individual teachers and others by the PTO. Teachers are encouraged to provide parents with opportunities when they are appropriate for the activity and/or support the students.

Since the WCASD Visitor Clearance Policy went into effect in 2014, many parents have provided us a copy of all three clearances. They are good for five years and we attempt to let all parents know at the end of the year if they are expired.. New parents or parents that did not submit completed clearances need to submit copies to the Main Office *before* they can be considered for an opportunity. For a complete overview of the policy and clearances required, please go to the WCASD website [[click here](#)] or call the Main Office.

Once you arrive at school, please report directly to the Main Office to sign-in through the Raptor system, and obtain a badge before going to the classroom/destination. We ask that you only go to the assigned location. Unscheduled visits to the classrooms are not permitted because they create unnecessary interruptions in instruction and/or infringe upon contractual teacher time.

Special Note Regarding Raptor: Visitors will need to produce his/her drivers' license at least two times each year because the database is cleared over the summer and in January. At times, the database does not hold on to information of people who have previously visited. We recommend having your license with you at each visit to avoid any delays.

CAFETERIA

Students are encouraged to bring lunch to school this year. The purchase options will be limited due to COVID-19. Breakfast will be available but those options will also be changed. The prices for breakfast and lunch are set in the beginning of each school year. The menus are posted, emailed by the District, and can be found online. To stay abreast of the food services being offered, please visit the [District website](#). ***Parents may place any limits on their child's account by writing a letter to the school.*** For example, you may request that your child be limited to one snack or no snacks. This message is noted in the Café computer and an alert will pop-up when your child goes to check-out.

WCASD uses a pre-pay cafeteria system in addition to cash purchasing. The PayForIt website [<https://www.payforit.net>] allows parents to put money into an account for the child/children so that no cash is necessary at school. The system is user-friendly and parents can also track what is being purchased. We strongly encourage parents to use this system. At school, the child is merely required to enter his/her student ID number. Student lunch accounts can also be replenished with a check (made payable to WCASD Cafeteria Fund), money order or cash. Please do your best to keep positive balances to avoid holds on the account.

The District participates in the National School Lunch/Breakfast Program at the elementary level. Children may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on a family's income. An application needs to be completed each year and sent to our school caseworker. The caseworker reviews the application and notifies the family of their eligibility. All applications are confidential. Applications for the National School Lunch/Breakfast Program are sent home via email in the beginning of the school year or can be requested from the school caseworker or the office at any point.

FOOD IN CLASSROOM

In keeping with the District Wellness Policy and efforts to avoid conflict with allergies/medical conditions, edible treats will be limited to the 3 seasonal class parties organized by teachers and Homeroom Parents. This does not include healthy snacks sent in for your child to consume during the teacher's scheduled snack break or lunch if it is determined that students will not eat in the Cafeteria this year due to COVID-19. Teachers will explain how snack works in class. In addition, edible treats are not permitted as a way to recognize your child on his/her birthday. We encourage you to use your creativity and consider options such as: sending in a game for indoor recess, asking to be a guest reader to the class, giving a non-edible treat or asking the teacher what might be appropriate.

PERMISSION NOTES

Students will NOT be permitted to ride a bus other than the one assigned this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Parents who need to change dismissal need to send in a note with signature with the student. The note should include the date and who will be picking up the children. Prior written notification is the preferred method and we strongly discourage phone calls unless an absolute emergency. PLEASE do not use email because substitutes do not have access. If you call the Main Office because you forgot to send a note or need to make an emergency change, the person assisting you can let you know what email account to send the scanned note (or picture).

COMMUNICATION FOLDERS

The primary source of communication is the Wildcat communication/homework folder. Each student will receive a communications folder at the beginning of the year compliments of the PTO. The student is asked to bring the filled folder home each day. The folder should be emptied and reviewed by the parent or guardian and then returned empty to school the next school day or with return communication. *These folders are not intended to transport party invitations or other non-school/district related events. Teachers will not distribute any of these items in school* as they do cause a disruption to the academic day.

ATTENDANCE

SAFE ARRIVAL

Safe Arrival is an absentee program designed to ensure your child arrives to school safely. If your child is absent or will arrive at school later than 9:10 AM, please call the SAFE ARRIVAL HOTLINE at 484-266-1810 between 5:00 PM (the previous evening) and 8:40 AM (the day of absence). Leave a message indicating your child's name, grade, teacher and date of absence. If you do not report your child's absence, the office assistant will contact you to verify his or her absence.

Special Note: This call DOES NOT replace an absence note (see below).

ABSENCES

If your child is absent from school, he/she must bring in a signed WCASD excuse form or note upon return. Due to COVID-19 and to decrease the paper coming into the office, we encourage you to send the signed note scanned (or picture) to Mrs. Johannesen, Attendance Secretary: ejohannesen@wcasd.net. The [excuse form](#) is on the WTE website and the PTO sells a pad of notes at their school store. The excuse form is to be signed by the parent and returned to the child's teacher within three (3) school days as explained in PA state law or it will be considered an unlawful absence. The caseworker will reach out after 3 unlawful absences to explain truancy laws and the possibility of a citation if there are additional unlawful absences. .

General Guidelines - The parent of a student who misses 10 days shall be notified in writing of the absence record. If the absences continue, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss strategies to promote regular attendance. If cumulative absences increase to 15, the Principal will conduct an informal review of records and recommendations will be made to the Director of Elementary Education. Additional information can be found in the *Discipline & Records Policy Handbook*.

- Children should only attend school when they are well enough to participate in all regular classes and recess. Fever, diarrhea, and vomiting should have subsided for at least 24 hours ***without medication*** to prevent the spread of infection. Additional information related to COVID-19 health protocols will be provided by WCASD. In addition, the district is seeking additional guidance as absences pertain to cumulative absences.
- **Family Vacations** - The principal must approve absences for a family vacation **five or more days in advance**. A [request form](#) can be printed from the WTE website. These absences count against the cumulative total. Any vacation days

beyond five will be entered as parent notes, unless those exceed 10. Additional absence is unlawful if all parent notes are exhausted per district policy.

Unlawful Absences [Cumulative] - The following absences fall into this category and count against the cumulative absences for the year:

- Any day for which a written excuse note is NOT submitted within 3 days of the absence.
- Parent notes can excuse student absences up to 10 times in a calendar year. After the tenth time, a physician's note is required to excuse the missed school or become unlawful.
- Family vacations that exceed the 5 day maximum after parent notes are exhausted.
- Parents receive written notification each time a child accumulates an unlawful absence. **After 4 unlawful absences and letters, a conference is required to create a plan to improve attendance. At the 6th unlawful, we will file a citation with District Court.**

Noncumulative Absences - The following absences fall into this category and do not count against the cumulative absences for the year:

- Death of a family member.
- Religious holidays.
- Illness verified by a physician's note submitted within 3 days of a student's absence.

Lateness to School - If a child is late for school, he/she will need to report to the office for a late slip to enter the classroom. If a child arrives after 12 noon, it is considered a half day absence and an excuse form is required. If the nurse sends a child home after 12, it is not considered an absence and an excuse form is not required. If it is before 12, the absence is excused.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Early dismissal is considered leaving prior to the end of the student day more than 60 minutes early and should be kept at a minimum to protect instructional time. Early dismissals will be combined with tardies to school and count towards unlawful absences. Therefore, it will be necessary to have these types of dismissals cleared by the office via a written note. We ask that you **avoid email notification** because there is too much room for error. When coming for your child, please come to the Office and sign your child out. Such dismissals generally may only be for medical appointments or other emergencies and must be approved. In the event of an unplanned change in dismissal, you may call the Office during the school day. Children feel more secure when they know their dismissal plans in advance so please keep last-minute phone notification to a minimum.

SAFETY

SAFE SCHOOLS PLAN

WCASD knows school safety is a vital concern for everyone. A Safe Schools Plan serves as the basis from which all schools create their building-specific plans. WTE regularly reviews the processes and procedures in use and makes adjustments as needed. While we hope we never have to respond to an actual emergency, we are confident in our prevention and preparation.

At WTE our approach to safety is best summarized in the graphic:



FIRE DRILLS

In accordance with state guidelines, WTE practices monthly fire drills. Faculty and staff review procedures with students in advance and work on evacuating the building in a safe and efficient manner. There are times when certain obstacles (i.e., a sign that may indicate students cannot proceed further down a hallway) are used so that the teacher has to make a quick decision.

SPECIALIZED SAFETY DRILLS

Over the course of the year, students will also participate in the following specialized drills:

- Internal and External Lockdown
- Extreme Weather
- Recess

TRANSPORTATION

WCASD works with Krapf to ensure safe travel to and from school each day. There are strict limits being placed upon us this year due to COVID-19. To stay abreast, you can visit the [Transportation](#) page on the district website. At the beginning of the year, we often experience delays as everyone adjusts to new routines. We appreciate your patience, in advance, and request that you call the school if there are any concerns. The following guidelines can be reinforced at home to help students understand the important part they play in making bus stops and bus rides a positive experience.

HOMELESSNESS

The West Chester Area School District serves students who are experiencing homelessness per District Policy #251 and federal and state guidelines. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was created to assist student and families experiencing homelessness. The Act defines the term “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

If you are staying temporarily with someone else because you lost your housing, staying in a hotel, campground, shelter, or in an outside or inadequate place, you and your children have special rights at school.

Those rights include:

- Staying in the same school even if you move, and receiving transportation to that school, if it is in the student’s best interest
- Enrolling in school immediately without the documents schools usually require
- Receiving free school meals
- Getting help with school supplies and other needs
- Help connecting young children with early childhood services

If your family is experiencing a loss of housing, please contact your school caseworker or the district’s Homeless Liaison to find out if you qualify for help. We will assess your eligibility for services and provide appropriate referrals to community resources.

BUS STOPS

Students who ride the bus should:

1. Be on time, but no earlier than ten (10) minutes before bus time.
2. Wait off of the road and out of traffic.
3. Avoid playing games or chasing anyone. Someone may run out into traffic.

-
4. Be sure the road is clear and wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the road to board the bus.
 5. Enter the bus swiftly and in an orderly manner to the assigned seat after the bus has come to a complete stop.
 6. Report directly home from the bus stop at the end of the school day.

SAFETY ON THE BUS

While riding the bus, students should:

1. Remain seated in the assigned seat while on the bus.
2. Face forward and keep hands within your seat. Keep all body parts inside the bus windows.
3. Save food or drink for after the bus ride.
4. Be courteous to the driver and obey him/her at all times.
5. Avoid talking to the driver or distracting him/her with loud talking/noises or disorderly behavior.
6. Follow all rules the driver has in place.

GENERAL BUS RULES

The safety of our children using school bus transportation is of great importance. Students are only permitted to ride his/her assigned bus and enter/exit at the assigned stop. It is expected that all students will conduct himself/herself in such a manner that does not endanger his/her safety or that of others. Our bus drivers have been trained to handle the buses in a safe manner. Reports from the bus driver concerning a student's misconduct will be brought to the principal's attention. Serious or continuous misbehavior could lead to suspension of bus privileges. If a student is suspended from the bus for any period of time, the parent has the responsibility of transporting the student to and from school.

Special Note: Changing buses will NOT be permitted as per the guidelines created by the Transportation Dept. in response to COVID-19.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

"West Chester Area School District has engaged Eagle Industrial Hygiene Associates, Inc. to fulfill the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR Part 763, Subpart E. This law requires that each Local Education Authority (LEA) engage EPA accredited individuals to initially inspect and subsequently re-inspect every three years all student and staff accessed areas for the presence of both friable and non-friable asbestos containing materials (ACM) and to develop an Asbestos Management Plan from the information developed from the building inspections. All accessible areas of the facility were inspected for asbestos-containing materials.

The Management Plan provides a description of the amount, type, location and condition of all ACM found in these areas. The Plan also contains a detailed schedule of responses and activities for handling the ACM. The Management Plan is available for review by interested parents, faculty and staff in the school offices during business hours.”

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

The West Chester Area School District uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for managing insects, rodents and weeds. Our goal is to protect every student from pesticide exposure by using an IPM approach to pest management. Our IPM approach focuses on making the school buildings and grounds an unfavorable habitat for these pests by removing food and water sources and eliminating their hiding and breeding places. We accomplish this through routine cleaning and maintenance. We routinely monitor the school buildings and grounds to detect any pests that are present. Pest sightings are reported to our IPM coordinator who evaluates the "pest problem" and determines the appropriate pest management techniques to address the problem. The techniques can include increased sanitation, modifying storage practices, sealing entry points, physically removing the pest, etc.

From time to time, it may be necessary to use pesticides registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to manage a pest problem. A pesticide will only be used when necessary, and will not be routinely applied. When a pesticide is necessary, the school will use the least toxic product(s) possible. Applications will be made only when unauthorized persons do not have access to the area being treated. Notices will be posted in these areas seventy-two (72) hours prior to application and for at least forty-eight (48) hours following the application. Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school may request prior notification of specific pesticide applications made at the school. This notification will include the name, address, and telephone number of the applicator providing the treatment, day of treatment and the pesticide being applied. To receive notification, you must be placed on the school's notification registry. Please complete and return the form which was sent to you via an email communication in August.

If a pesticide application must be made to control an emergency pest problem, notice will be provided by telephone to any parent or guardian who has requested such notification in writing. Emergency applications of EPA registered pesticides will be done on a Friday evening after occupants leave the building. Exemptions to this notification include disinfectants and antimicrobial products; self-containerized baits placed in areas not accessible to students, and gel type baits placed in cracks, crevices or voids. Notification requests will be valid for the current school year and must be renewed each year. If you have any questions, please contact the IPM Coordinator's Office at 484.266.1252.

CURRICULUM

All of the elementary schools in the West Chester Area School District follow the same [curriculum](#). The four core subjects [Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies] are complemented by a robust curriculum in special programs of Art, Music, Health & Physical Education, and Library Media Science. Each grade level is aligned to Pennsylvania standards and works to prepare students for middle school and beyond.

WTE teachers work hard to bring the curriculum to life by:

-
- Developing lessons that make appropriate cross-curricular connections so that students build a strong framework for the future.
 - Promoting hands-on learning that stimulates active participation with the curriculum.
 - Integrating innovative teaching and learning strategies that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration in all content areas.
 - Challenging students to achieve their personal best.

Our teachers are supported by the Director of Elementary Education, Dr. Sara Missett, the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Tammi Florio, and Content Area Supervisors who keep administrators and teachers abreast of the latest ideas in their fields, support quality instruction, and aid in extending or coordinating programs.

- Language Arts – Dr. Rich Mitchell and Mrs. Debbie Whitmire, Teacher on Assignment
- Mathematics – Mr. Ian Kerr
- Science – Dr. Paul Joyce
- Fine Arts & Social Studies – Dr. Kristen Barnello
- Special Education – Mrs. Melissa Kleinman
- Assessments & Re-evaluation - Mr. Steve Werner
- ELL & Equity - Dr. Chrissy Eagles

SUPPORT SERVICES

There are a number of programs and services available at WTE to support our mission of every child achieving his/her personal best. While every student will not be a part of every program, the services are there when it is identified as a need for an individual.

School Counselor - WTE offers a full-time support system to all students. In addition to assisting with the implementation of programs such as Second Step, there are individual and group guidance programs throughout the year. Our interventions often take the form of discussions for strategy and coping skill identification, but are not meant to take the role of therapeutic or psychoanalytic counseling. [Click here for website.](#)

Gifted Program - We provide an enrichment-based education program to students who qualify. Referrals can be made at any time but only one referral a year is permitted. Any questions about the screening process should be directed to Dr. Missett, who oversees Gifted Education [484-266-1000]. The enrichment program allows us to extend the experience to foster the development of:

- Creativity
- Independent learning research skills
- High-level critical thinking skills

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) - WTE has a team that meets on a regular basis to assist classroom teachers in planning and implementing strategies that are designed to help students meet their goals. Referrals come from any team member, including parents. Each student is assessed on a regular basis to ensure progress is being made. If it is determined that an individual student needs additional support (enrichment or differentiated approach), the MTSS Team discusses the data, develops a plan, and communicates with parents.

English Language Development Program [ELD] - The purpose of this program is to provide additional support to students whose primary language in the home is not English. Students are assessed to determine if they qualify for additional support that varies based on needs.

Special Education - If it is determined that a student has a disability that may require special designed instruction in order to benefit from their educational experience, there is a process in place to help us meet his/her needs. West Chester Area School District currently educates over one thousand Special Education students in a full continuum of services offered in its sixteen schools as well as with a combination of Chester County Intermediate Unit, approved independent schools, and private school placements. For additional information on Pupil Services, please [Click Here](#) to go to the WCASD Pupil Services webpage.

FIELD TRIPS

Due to COVID-19 there are currently no plans to have field trips this year. If anything changes, we will let you know.

ASSESSMENT & TESTING

In accordance with the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools and the WCASD Administration, the School Board has approved a district-wide testing program designed to provide information related to proficiency of students on standardized tests of academic achievement and aptitude. In addition to these tests, our teachers incorporate a variety of classroom assessments to inform instruction and prepare students for the state-mandated tests. For additional information, please [Click Here](#) to go to the WCASD Assessment & Testing webpage.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) - The testing window is established annually and specific dates will be provided to parents for planning. All students in grades 3-8 must take either the PSSA or the PASA. At WTE students take Reading (3, 4, 5), Math (3, 4, 5), and Science (4) each year. PSSAs were not administered in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19. There is no official decision related to Spring 2021 as of July 2020. Information regarding religious exemptions and opt-outs is distributed prior to the testing window and is coordinated with the building principal.

Grade Level Testing - In order to make appropriate instructional decisions, WTE teachers employ a variety of assessment measures. From formal tests like DIBELS to their individual teacher-created tests, teachers use the data to inform their instruction. Additional information is provided to students and parents on the timing and results. If a question arises, please contact the classroom teacher for more information.

REPORT CARDS - TRIMESTER SCHEDULE

The following dates have been established for the 2020-21 school year:

- First Trimester Ends - December 2, 2020
- Second Trimester Ends - March 9, 2021
- Third Trimester Ends - TBD

HOMWORK

In order to extend the learning experience and help students practice, review, and apply knowledge, there will be homework assigned on a regular basis. Last year was the second under the newly revised WCASD Homework Policy [[click here](#)]. The policy does not eliminate homework. Rather, it provides teachers more flexibility and requires additional thought be put into the purpose for the homework. Each grade level has worked hard to comply with the new guidelines and will continue to reflect on their practice. If your student has been absent for 3 days, you may request homework by contacting the Main Office before 10 AM.

UNIFIED ARTS

Music - All students in grades K-5 have Music one day within the four-day cycle. The curriculum allows students to participate in interdisciplinary activities, gain insight into America's multicultural heritage, increase feelings of self-esteem, work in cooperative learning groups, develop listening skills, and engage in singing and playing a wide variety of songs using developing musical skills.

Instrumental Music Program - We are fortunate to have options for students to take a string instrument (e.g., violin, viola) in third, fourth and fifth grades and/or a band instrument (e.g., flute, clarinet) fourth and fifth grades only. This is a program the WCASD offers in addition to the general/vocal music class.

All students observe an instrument demonstration early in the school year and decide whether to make the commitment. Students have a half-hour group lesson per week at no charge, which occurs during the regular school day. However, if students are not performing to classroom expectations and the concern appears to be related to lesson time absences, the instrumental music teacher will attempt to arrange another lesson time with the subject teacher. To monitor student progress, reports will be given to parents in January and June.

The student is responsible for instrument rental and purchase of a lesson book, both of which are available for reasonable fees at area music stores. Students who have been playing one or more years can participate in the Advanced Band or Orchestra, which rehearses before school for 45 minutes once per week (transportation must be provided by parent/guardian). These groups perform in the Winter and Spring Concerts. Beginning string players will have the opportunity to perform.

Art - Students in grades K-5 have art class one day within the four-day cycle. The program is designed to inspire students to create, listen, talk and learn about art. Students are introduced to basic art concepts and a variety of media. The curriculum interweaves art appreciation with art from other cultures, and integrates other disciplines.

Library - Students in grades K-5 have Library one day within the four-day cycle. There are times each day set aside for book exchange. Teachers may also plan more time with the librarian if her schedule permits. Overdue notices are issued monthly as

a reminder to return materials. There is a fee if an item is lost or damaged. A student's report card will not be issued at the end of the year until all library obligations have been met. [Click here for program website.](#)

Physical Education - Students in grades K-5 have P.E. class one day within the four-day cycle. Children are required to wear tennis shoes (sneakers) during physical education classes and should dress properly for physical activities both indoors and outdoors.

Our Physical Education program gives students the chance to learn about and take part in a variety of activities, such as rhythmic, natural play, individual, team, recreational and physical fitness. At the K-2 level, the areas of emphasis are movement experiences, low organized games, manipulative skills, self-testing activities and rhythmic activities. At the 3-5 level, the areas of emphasis are a continuation of primary activities, fitness activities, specialized skills and modified games in a variety of sport activities and apparatus. In order to be excused from physical education class, students must have a note from a parent/guardian and/or a doctor noting their physical limitations. The note should be presented to the school nurse. [Click here for program website.](#)

Health - Students in grades K-5 receive health education in the classroom. A breakdown of the health curriculum scope and sequence for K-2 and 3-5 can be obtained from the district's health office. Areas covered in Health are: mental and emotional health, family life, nutrition, substance use prevention, personal health and fitness, disease prevention and control, injury prevention and safety, consumer health, community health, and environmental health. In fifth grade, maturation is part of the health curriculum. This topic is taught by the classroom teachers and focuses on puberty and adolescent changes. Additional information is provided in advance of the lesson in late Spring.

Conflict Managers - WTE identifies and trains a small group of students in the area of appropriate communication and conflict resolution. By promoting student awareness and practicing problem-solving techniques, we can help students help each other through issues.

Activity Fee - There is an annual fee to participate in Band, Chorus, Orchestra, and/or After School Sports. Specific information is provided online and by activity sponsors. Failure to pay the fee may result in removal from the activity until payment is received. It is a one-time charge regardless of the number of activities in which the student participates. [Click here for more information.](#)

TECHNOLOGY

Computers - An important part of 21st century teaching and learning is knowing when to incorporate technology into a lesson. The skillful integration of technology has a positive impact on student learning. The WTE faculty continues to challenge itself to develop lessons that require students to critically think, problem solve, and collaborate in new ways. We are fortunate to have classroom computers, interactive whiteboards, and an increasing number of iPads for everyday use by teachers and students. In addition, WTE believes strongly in modeling and teaching the proper use of technology in every-day life. We understand everyone is challenged to help young children navigate this ever-changing world.

Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) - The West Chester Area School District strongly believes in the educational value of the Internet and recognizes its potential to support and enrich the curriculum and the student learning process. Use of the Internet in the classroom and Library is supervised by teachers and is used only for activities related to the curriculum. All students and their parents are expected to read the WCASD Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). You have the option to not have

your child utilize the internet for instructional purposes. A form will accompany the AUP policy when you register for the first time. If you do not consent for your child to utilize Internet resources for curriculum purposes and the acceptance of student responsibility for Internet use, please sign and return the form available via Parent Portal. Students will be trained in the appropriate and safe use of Internet resources. Records are maintained at the WCASD Technology Office and passwords are then assigned to the students.

HEALTH OFFICE

General Information - Children should only attend school when they are well enough to participate in all regular classes and recess. Fever, diarrhea, and vomiting should have subsided for at least 24 hours without medication to prevent the spread of infection. Exceptions include (but are not limited to) broken bones, past surgery, etc. Students should also remain home for 24 hours after being placed on antibiotics for any condition.

- By district policy, the school nurse is not permitted to diagnose or treat illnesses and injuries occurring at home. Do not send your child to school expecting this service.
- Please advise the nurse of newly diagnosed, chronic or recurring health problems and any - medications given at home on a regular basis.
- By district policy, students are not permitted to keep or carry medication of any type or to self-administer medications during school hours. All medications are to be secured and administered in the Health room. [Click here for the district medication policy.](#)
- [Click here](#) for access to the Lice policy and other health matters.
- [Click here](#) for the Health Office website with helpful information.

Medications - The school nurse must administer all medications. When sending prescription medications into school, they must be accompanied by a doctor's and parent note. The medication must be in the correctly labeled pharmacy bottle. When sending in over-the-counter medications, please send in a parent note signed and dated explaining the reason for the medication. These types of medications must be in the original bottles with your child's name on the bottle and should not be expired. These steps will ensure the best possible care for your children and maintain a safe environment for all.

Food Allergies - WTE works hard to ensure all teachers and staff are made aware of allergies that are reported to us at the beginning of the year. Special precautions are taken in the Café and in classrooms during snack time to maintain a safe environment. In the Cafe, due to space limitations and changes due to COVID-19, we do not have the capacity to offer a nut free table. ***While we will not permit edible treats for daily celebrations, there are several classroom and school functions that have food.*** We know placing limits on edible treats for celebrations is seen by some to be too harsh. When we consider our students with medical conditions or severe reactions to a variety of different allergens, we err on the side of caution and promote other ways to celebrate. If you want to recognize your child in some way on his/her birthday, we encourage you to use your creativity and consider options such as: sending in a game for indoor recess, asking to be a guest reader to the class, giving a non-edible treat or asking the teacher what might be appropriate.

Note: [Click here](#) for Wellness Policy and Guidelines

Immunizations - The State Health Department works hand-in-hand with the WCASD to ensure students are properly immunized. Required doses for school entry and other important information can be found on the WCASD Health Services webpage. [Click here](#) to access that information.

Note: The Public Health Immunization Clinic will give any required immunizations free of charge. The hours at the Government Services Building are Tuesday and Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Wednesday, 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

WT-PTO

The WTE PTO is composed of volunteers who work in conjunction with the principal and teachers to help create a positive experience for our students. In addition to the PTO Executive Board, which serves a two-year term, there are numerous committees that are led by parents. The 2019-20 Executive Board consists of the following parents:

Co-Presidents - Karen Learn and Pam Baldesari

Vice President - Jen Watkins & Angie Pepe

Treasurer - Liz Quigley

Secretary - Shannan Mannes

Annual PTO membership dues are paid per family. The funds are directed to the enrichment of the school and the benefit of the children. Paying dues entitles members to a school directory and to vote at general meetings on board issues and spending. For additional information on the benefits and for ways to get involved, [Click Here](#) to visit their webpage linked to the WTE website. Please consider the various ways to get involved. We are able to expand the experiences of our students due to the tremendous support of our PTO. Each has a different time commitment and level of involvement and most are composed of at least 2 co-chairs and several volunteers.

Special Note: Before committing to any assignment, please be aware that younger siblings will not be able to volunteer with you on school grounds during the instructional day. Since you are coming to work with our students and/or supervise an activity with students, we feel it is too distracting and a potential safety concern to have younger children that will demand your attention. In addition, we will also not be able to invite siblings from other WTE classes to your location to attend parties or functions as it is disruptive to the instructional day.

*"The achievements of
an organization are
the results of the
combined effort of
each individual."*

Vince Lombardi

