

Warrior Handbook

Official Guide for Students and Parents

Westside High School

Westside Community Schools

2023-2024 School Year



Westside Community Schools

School District 66
909 South 76th Street
Omaha, NE 68114
402.390.2100

Student Calendar 2023-24

July 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2023

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29	30	31				

November 2023

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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Wednesday, August 2 – ALL Teachers and Staff Return (excluding LEA)

Thursday, August 10 – FIRST DAY of School for Students

Friday, September 1 – Professional Learning Day (No school)

Monday, September 4 – LABOR DAY (No School)

Thursday, October 12 – Parent-Teacher Communication (No school)

Friday, October 13 – No School

Monday, October 16 – Professional Learning Day (No school)

November 22-24 – Thanksgiving Break (No school)

Thursday, December 21 – Last School Day of 1st semester w/ early dismissal

•12:30 dismissal for WHS/West Campus

•12:45 dismissal for WMS

•1:00 dismissals for PreK-6th grade elementary buildings

Monday, January 8 – Students return and 2nd semester begins

Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No school)

Friday, January 26 – Professional Learning Day (No school)

Monday, February 19 – Teacher Work Day (No school)

Tuesday, February 20 – Professional Learning Day (No school)

Thursday, March 14 – Parent-Teacher Communication (No school)

Friday, March 15 – No school

Friday, March 29 – Last School Day before Spring Break with early dismissal

•12:30 dismissal for WHS/West Campus

•12:45 dismissal for WMS

•1:00 dismissals for PreK-6th grade elementary buildings

April 1-5 – SPRING BREAK (No school)

Monday, April 29 – Professional Learning Day (No school)

Sunday, May 19 – GRADUATION

Friday, May 24 – LAST DAY OF SCHOOL with 12:00 dismissal
(District Celebration and Work Time)

 Students in School

Approved by Board of Education
11-7-22

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FOREWORD

Intent of Handbook

This Handbook is intended for use by students, parents, and staff to serve as a guide to Westside Community Schools' rules and regulations. All students and parents are responsible for becoming familiar with the Handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Parents are encouraged to use this Handbook as a resource and to assist their children in following the rules contained in this Handbook.

Although the information found in this Handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, it is not intended to be so all-encompassing as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day or school year. This Handbook does not create a contract. The District reserves to its administrators the right to make decisions and changes in rules and procedures at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. Administrators are responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the Handbook. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this Handbook, the appropriate administrator(s) will make decisions based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Westside Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, marital, parental or pregnancy status, military/veteran status or any other category protected by law in its programs and activities or in admission or access to, or treatment in, hiring and employment. Retaliation is prohibited. The following person(s) coordinate our compliance and can assist with questions or filing a concern or report:

For students, parents or other non-employees:

Coordinator of Student Services/Title IX Coordinator – ABC Building, 909 South 76th Street Omaha NE 68114 (402) 390-2100.

For further information about anti-discrimination laws or to file a complaint of discrimination you may also contact the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Dept. of Education, One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320, Kansas City, MO 64106, Tele.(816) 268-0550, Fax (816) 268-0599, (TDD) (800) 877-8339, or ocr.kansascity@ed.gov.

MISSION AND GOALS

District Mission Statement

The mission of the Westside Community School District, as an innovative educational system, is to ensure academic excellence and to serve the unique needs of all learners.

Vision

Westside Community Schools will relentlessly pursue innovative educational ideals and promise to personalize learning for every student. We invite the challenge of developing a community of learners who embrace a broader, richer definition of success.

Complaint Procedures

General Complaints

Constructive criticism of the school or school system is welcome through any medium when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its tasks more effectively.

In an effort to resolve all concerns and issues at the earliest stage and through informal methods and procedures, any complaint should first be addressed with the teacher or staff member involved.

1. When the teacher or staff member receives a complaint, he/she will immediately address the concerns by conducting an informal conference with the complainant, thereby providing an opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the identified concerns.
2. If the concerns are not resolved by the teacher or staff member, the complainant may contact the Principal, who will conduct an informal conference with the complainant, again providing an opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the complainant's concerns.
3. If the complainant's concerns are not resolved by the Principal, the complainant may contact the Director of Student Services, who will conduct an informal conference with the complainant, providing yet another opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the complainant's concerns.
4. If the complainant's concerns are not resolved by the head of Student Services, the complainant may contact the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and District Operations, who will conduct an informal conference with the complainant, thereby providing an opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the complainant's concerns and issues.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

For information on how to report a concern about harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, see the **State and Federal Programs** chapter of this Handbook, Board Policy 7190, or the front page of the District website (westside66.org).

SCHOOL DAY

M-T-TH-F SCHEDULE			WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE		
MOD	TIME FRAME	INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES	MOD	TIME FRAME	INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES
Homeroom	8:00-8:10	10	NO HOMEROOM		
1	8:15-8:52	37	1	8:00-8:41	41
2	8:57-9:34	37	2	8:46-9:22	36
3	9:39-10:16	37	3	9:27-10:03	36
4 (Lunch A)	10:21-10:58	37	4 (Lunch A)	10:08-10:44	36
5 (Lunch B)	11:03-11:40	37	5 (Lunch B)	10:49-11:25	36
6 (Lunch C)	11:45-12:22	37	6 (Lunch C)	11:30-12:06	36
7 (Lunch D)	12:27-1:04	37	7 (Lunch D)	12:11-12:47	36
8	1:09-1:46	37	8	12:52-1:28	36
9	1:51-2:28	37	9	1:33-2:09	36
10	2:33-3:10	37	10	2:14-2:50	36
1:10 DISMISSAL SCHEDULE (ALL DAYS OF THE WEEK)			12:10 DISMISSAL SCHEDULE (ALL DAYS OF THE WEEK)		
MOD	TIME FRAME	INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES	MOD	TIME FRAME	INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES
NO HOMEROOM			NO HOMEROOM		
1	8:00-8:31	31	1	8:00-8:25	25
2	8:36-9:02	26	2	8:30-8:50	20
3	9:07-9:33	26	3	8:55-9:15	20
4 (Lunch A)	9:38-10:04	26	4 (Lunch A)	9:20-9:40	20
5 (Lunch B)	10:09-10:35	26	5 (Lunch B)	9:45-10:05	20
6 (Lunch C)	10:40-11:06	26	6 (Lunch C)	10:10-10:30	20
7 (Lunch D)	11:11-11:37	26	7 (Lunch D)	10:35-10:55	20
8	11:42-12:08	26	8	11:00-11:20	20
9	12:13-12:39	26	9	11:25-11:45	20
10	12:44-1:10	26	10	11:50-12:10	20

Modular Scheduling

At Westside High School, the day is organized using a system called Modular Scheduling. The day is divided into 10 modules or mods. Mods 4-7 are lunch mods.

For every course, the number of class meetings per week is determined by the respective departments. Each course has a definite structure which can include **small groups**, **large groups**, and **laboratory ("lab") meetings**, all led by teachers working both alone and in teaching teams. For example: a student taking Biology has one large group meeting of 40 minutes and four small group meetings of 40 minutes during a normal week.

The last component of modular instruction is **independent study mods**. These are mods in which students are not scheduled to be in class. During these mods, students are expected to work on class assignments, do recreational reading, confer with teachers, work in an instructional material center (IMC), visit counselors, or spend time collaborating with other students. With independent study time on their schedules, students become responsible for managing their time. Upperclassmen typically have more freedom in deciding how to use their independent study time. Westside staff members believe that young adults can handle this freedom appropriately and learn to make decisions on their own; however, with such freedom come responsibilities that students must assume. Students who do not assume these responsibilities will have independent study time assigned for them.

Communication

Communicating with families is crucial; we use a variety of tools to keep parents informed about what's going on at school and to find out what parents are interested in or concerned about.

A crucial tool in ensuring good communication between home and school is the District's Back-to-School Update. For more information on the Back-to-School Update, please see the **Support Services** chapter of this Handbook.

Other Communication Tools

Our most common means of communication include

- BrightArrow mass communication
- SchoolStatus phone calls, texts, and emails from teachers
- telephone calls and voice mail
- parent meetings
- social media (primarily Facebook and Twitter)
- e-mail (lastname.firstname@westside66.net — example: doe.john@westside66.net)
- PowerSchool
- District website (westside66.org) & School website (westside66.org/whs)

Severe Weather and School Cancellations

The Superintendent is authorized to dismiss school and school-related activities in the event of severe weather conditions, emergencies, or special school-sponsored events.

In the event of inclement weather, parents/guardians are responsible for deciding whether their children attend school.

Generally, school will not be dismissed during the school day because of inclement weather or other emergencies. If they wish, parents may come to the school and pick up their children. Generally, all school related activities involving students will also be cancelled when school is dismissed due to severe weather.

If severe weather forces the closing of school, an announcement will be made on local radio/TV stations, and parents who have signed up for notifications will receive an automated phone message, usually by 6:30 a.m.

Daily Announcements

The Daily Announcements are emailed to students and parents daily and read aloud in Homeroom. Because the Daily Announcements contain important information about all aspects of school life, including procedures, deadlines, and upcoming events, students and parents are expected to stay up-to-date on its contents.

Warrior Bulletin

The Warrior Bulletin is published periodically throughout the year to update students and parents on a variety of school related issues and happenings.

Arrival at/Dismissal from School

Students should arrive at school no earlier than 7:30 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made with a coach or other staff member. Prior to that time, the school is not responsible for supervision of students. IMCs are open to students starting at 7:30 a.m.

Students are dismissed at the end of the last period of the school day unless circumstances dictate otherwise (early dismissal, detention, etc.). Students are expected to leave the building and school grounds by 3:30 p.m., except if the student is meeting with a staff member or participating in a school-sponsored activity. The school is not responsible for supervision of students once students are to have left school grounds.

Students may attend the Boys & Girls Club program at Westbrook Elementary after school; bus transportation is available.

Dropping Off/Picking Up Students

Those picking up or dropping off students should do so at the main entrance, the west lot, or the south lot. To avoid crowded parking lots immediately before and after school, drivers may wish to make arrangements to pick students up a few blocks away from school. Drivers may not stop or park in handicapped loading areas or in areas designated for school buses.

Between 8:00 a.m. and 3:10 p.m., students are to be dropped off and picked up in the main entrance area only. Students will not be allowed to exit or enter through other building doors.

Digital I.D. Cards

All students will have a Digital ID installed during their first week of school that they can easily access on their school iPad and may install on a personal electronic device if they choose to do so. Accessing and presenting a student Digital ID will be an expected routine for students during the school day. Students will also need to present their Digital ID at school-sponsored activities. Teachers or supervisors may request a student to show their Digital ID card at any time. Students need their Digital ID for lunch purchases and to enter and leave the building during the school day.

Plastic Student ID cards are available to students as circumstances arise. Replacement of lost plastic ID cards is \$5.

Closed Campus

Westside is a closed campus for all students except for students who qualify for and obtain an off-campus pass. Students are expected to be in school all day unless arrangements have been made with the student's Dean or the student has obtained a Permit to Leave the Building.

Leaving school without permission is a violation of the student Code of Conduct and will result in violators being assigned detention, in-school suspension, Wednesday night school or Saturday school for each occurrence. Other penalties specified in the Code of Conduct may apply for repeated violation of this rule.

Only students enrolled in On the Job Training (OJT)/internship and special work study programs are allowed to leave school for the purpose of work. I.D. cards must be so annotated.

Outdoor Activities

Certain instructional activities may be held outdoors, except when extended exposure to the elements is inadvisable or when the Principal determines it to be otherwise unsafe. Outdoor activities will not be conducted when either the air temperature or Wind Chill Factor is 10°F or lower, or when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is 101 or higher, as reported by the Environmental Protection Agency (airnow.gov).

Signing In and Out of School

Students arriving at school after homeroom or returning to school must check in through the main entrance on the east side of the building. Students who leave school during the day must have a pass or Permit to Leave the Building. Failure to follow this procedure may result in the absence being permanently recorded as unexcused.

More information on student absences can be found in the **Attendance** chapter of this Handbook.

Restricted Schedule

Students may be assigned to IMC's, Study Center or RISE during independent mods when they have two or more failing quarter grades. Off-campus passes may be voided for students with two or more failing quarter grades.

Passes

Juniors and seniors are eligible for passes to leave campus according to the criteria below.

<p>To be eligible for a pass, both Juniors and Seniors must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have parent permission;• demonstrate good attendance;• leave the building only during unscheduled 40-minute mods (single 22-minute mods are not covered by passes);• have no unpaid fees.	
<p>Seniors <u>also</u> must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be scheduled in a minimum of 23 credits of class or 25 mods per week.• have completed 40 hours of Service Learning 1st sem.; 50 hours 2nd sem.*• have mod 1 unscheduled for a late arrival - no exceptions. <p>*Adjusted for COVID-19</p>	<p>Juniors <u>also</u> must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be scheduled in a minimum of 25 credits of class or 28 mods per week.• have completed 20 hours of Service Learning 1st sem.; 30 hours 2nd sem.*• have a minimum of mods 1 unscheduled for a late arrival. <p>*Adjusted for COVID-19</p>

Business Office

Students and Parents can visit the Business Office to pay fees and fines and to purchase event tickets. It is open daily, from 7:45 a.m - 3:45 p.m. The Business Office is closed during Homeroom. The Business Office will not cash checks for non-school-related purposes. The phone number for the business office is (402) 343-2782.

Courtyard

The Courtyard is the student cafeteria. School rules apply in the Courtyard, as well as the following additional rules:

- Students must consume all food in the Courtyard.
- Students are expected to return trays and clean up their own eating area.
- Supervisors have the right to restrict the number of students at a table.
- No cards, games, or gambling are permitted.
- Devices with sound must be used with headphones or ear buds.
- Students may bring sack lunches from home, but fast food items purchased outside of school are not permitted in the Courtyard.
- Students who cause disruptions in the Courtyard may be referred to a dean.
- Students may be in the courtyard for only one 40-minute lunch mod between the hours of 10:20 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. each day. Other "independent study times" during lunch must be spent in IMC's.
- School issued technology devices should remain in backpacks during lunch mods to prevent spills and damage on technology.

Breakfast

Breakfast is offered daily in The Café from 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. Second chance breakfast is offered daily in The Café after 8:20 a.m. and reduced pricing is available for those that qualify.

Lunch

Lunch is offered daily in The Café from 10:20 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and at Café Express from 10:20 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with adjusted hours on days when there is a late start or early dismissal. Both locations serve meals that follow USDA Guidelines under the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and federal Smart Snacks guidelines. Service includes made-from-scratch items, farm-to-school produce, and a variety of cuisine from American comfort food to international choices. Free and reduced pricing is available for those that qualify.

The following rules assure the continued smooth operation and safety of our customers:

- Students are responsible for knowing their current account balances.
- Students should not use their lunch accounts to pay for someone else's food.
- Students are not permitted to loiter in or around Café Express or the serving areas.
- Service areas are subject to video surveillance.
- Customers should touch only food that they intend to purchase.
- Students should respect the posted portion sizes. Additional charges apply for larger portions.
- Taking food without paying for it is considered theft. Violators will be reported and face consequences.
- Food is not to be consumed until paid for.
- Appropriate and respectful behavior is expected at all time.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meal Program

Forms and guidelines for free or reduced lunch are available to any student. Parents will be notified if they are eligible after an application has been filed. Students who received free or reduced lunch last year, in our district, automatically qualify for the same status during the first week of school. More information on this program is available in the **State and Federal Programs** chapter of this Handbook.

Paying for Meals

Students are encouraged to debit their food purchases against prepaid accounts in their name. Online deposits can be made 24/7 by credit/debit card or check at myschoolbucks.com. In-person deposits can be made by cash or check from 7:00-8:00 a.m. in the cafeteria and during the lunch hour, after all students have gone through the lunch line. Checks should be made payable to "Westside Nutrition Services."

No student will go without lunch. In cases where students do not have money for lunch, a regular meal will be provided and appropriate arrangements will be made with parents or guardians at a later time. Detailed information is provided in the **State and Federal Programs** chapter of this Handbook.

Outside Food

Students are not permitted to bring in food from outside vendors during school hours without staff permission.

Messages for Students

From time to time it may be necessary for parents/guardians to get messages to their children. Parents are urged to confine this practice to messages that cannot wait until after school.

Parent Access to Students

Both parents are presumed by the school to have equal rights in educational matters, and both parents will, unless otherwise determined by the District, be allowed to:

- Visit the child at school (classroom/school activities, volunteering, lunch)
- Be contacted by the school when the child is sick at school or has some other need
- Pick up the child during the day (such as for illness, medical appointments, emergency dismissals, etc.)
- Pick up the child at the end of the school day
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Receive copies of school mailings, grades and educational records

If one parent wishes to request that another parent not be allowed one or more of the above rights, he or she must notify the building principal and provide a court order or other legal document specifically restricting the other parent's rights to do so.

The school will review any information submitted and make a determination as to whether the other parent's rights have been legally restricted. Both parents shall continue to have equal access until a review of the legal documents has been conducted and a determination made.

Professional Learning and Collaboration

The District emphasizes the importance of staff development and believes that the mission of the Office of Professional Learning is to improve learning for all students by increasing staff effectiveness through ongoing, research-based opportunities for growth and renewal. All employees are expected to engage in courses, programs and activities leading to their professional growth, expansion of skills, and improved job performance.

Westside Community Schools provides Professional Learning Collaboration days set aside to provide opportunities to focus on district, building, and individual teacher goals. Dates designated as Professional Learning Days are listed in the calendar that is part of this Handbook. Additionally, students are dismissed at 2:50 p.m. on Wednesdays, so that teachers can participate in Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.

Emergency Procedures

Westside staff and students are trained to respond to emergencies by following the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). SRP has been adopted by most school districts and law enforcement agencies in Douglas and Sarpy County in an effort to develop common terminology and procedures to maximize the effectiveness of our response to school emergencies.

SRP involves just four responses: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuation, and Shelter.

Hold requires all students to stay in their classroom due to a situation that requires the hallway to be cleared. Classes go on as usual. Useful for medical emergencies or any reason to restrict movement within the building.

Secure is called when one or more persons or animals outside the school pose a potential threat to student safety. The school day proceeds as usual, but students are kept inside the building until the potential threat has passed.

Lockdown is called when there is someone or something inside the building that poses an immediate threat to student safety. Teachers verify that classroom doors are locked and that students are moved to a location in the classroom where they cannot be seen from interior hallways.

Evacuation occurs when conditions inside the building require that all students be moved out of the building. The most common form of evacuation drill is a fire drill, but students might be evacuated for other reasons, such as a gas leak or damage to the building. If students are unable to be in the building for an extended period or due to extreme weather, students will be moved to a designated temporary evacuation site or to a reunification site where they can be safely released to a parent or guardian.

Shelter requires that all students go to a designated location inside the building designed to withstand severe thunderstorms or tornados.

Students and staff practice these responses throughout the year in an attempt to ensure that all students and staff know what to do and to identify plan elements that may need attention. Except for drills, parents are notified any time conditions warrant the activation of these protocols.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

Students are considered to have good attendance if they are present for 95 percent of the days that school is in session. That means **missing no more than nine days per year**, or about one day per month. Good attendance is crucial to getting the most out of the educational opportunities offered by the school. Researchers have found a close connection between student attendance and academic performance, and there is evidence that students with good school attendance encounter greater success in adulthood.

State law and Board Policy mandate that every person who has legal or actual charge or control of any child between the ages of six and eighteen shall cause such child to attend regularly each day school is open unless illness or severe weather conditions make attendance impossible. State statutes also require school staff to render all services in their power to compel the unlawfully absent child to attend school. If the Principal believes a child is unlawfully absent from school, he or she shall immediately investigate and take action when necessary.

Daily Attendance

All students are expected to attend school each day that school is open and in session unless (s)he is excused by a parent or guardian.

Regular school attendance is vital to a good academic record in any educational program but is particularly so in a modular system since many classes do not meet daily. Attendance records are also an important part of each student's permanent file. The following procedure has been established to help improve school attendance.

Student Absences

Excused and Unexcused Absences

An absence from school will be recorded by the school as Excused or Unexcused.

1. Excused Absences. Excused absences are those deemed by the Principal or designee to be obligatory, unavoidable, or part of the school's educational program. Absences should be cleared through the Principal's office in advance whenever possible. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require approval in advance. An absence for any of the following reasons shall generally be excused, provided the required procedures for Notifying the School of Student Absence have been followed:
 - a. Personal Illness (a physician's verification may be required after four consecutive days of absence for illness).
 - b. Medical or dental appointments which require the student's absence from school.
 - c. Death or serious illness of a family member of the student.
 - d. Attending a funeral.
 - e. Observance of religious holidays.
 - f. Legal matters which require the student's absence from school.
 - g. School-sponsored events that require the student's absence from school.
 - h. Family trips in which student accompanies parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
 - i. College planning visits (high school only).
 - j. Other absences that have received prior approval of the Principal.

The Principal retains the discretion to deny approval for any of the foregoing reasons, depending on circumstances such as the student's absence record, the student's academic status, the tests or other projects that may be missed.

2. Unexcused Absences. An absence, even with parental approval, may be unexcused. If a student's absence is unexcused, the student may be required to make up work and time missed.

Tardiness

1. Tardy to School. Students who arrive after the start of Homeroom or the first class period of the school day are considered tardy to school.
 - a. Students who arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 (except on Wednesdays) must report directly to homeroom. Arriving after 8:00 will result in being marked tardy *even if* parents call and explain the tardiness.
 - b. Students who arrive after 8:15 must check in with the door supervisor or the attendance office.
 - c. Repeated tardiness may result in the loss of student privileges, detention, assignment to in-school suspension, Wednesday night school, Saturday school, or further disciplinary action.

2. Tardy to Class. Students are considered tardy to class if they are not in their assigned classroom or area when the bell rings to signal the start of the class period.
 - a. When tardiness to class becomes a problem, the teacher will assign consequences, inform the student's Dean, and school counselor will develop a plan to eliminate the student's tardiness.
 - b. The number of tardies must be communicated to the student by the teacher.
 - c. A student arriving more than ten minutes late to class will be marked unexcused for the entire class period.

Unexcused Absences from Class

Class attendance is mandatory for all students. In cases of unexcused absences from class, including instances in which the student misses class because he or she is dean's office resolving disciplinary issues, the student is responsible for checking with teacher(s) for any information or assignments missed.

Unexcused absences are handled according to the following guidelines.

1. First and Second Unexcused Absence from a Class. The Dean sends an email and pre-recorded phone message (if available) to the parents/guardian notifying them that the student was absent for one or more classes that day. Student receives a similar email message and Dean explains consequences of additional unexcused absences. Students then have two school days to serve a 45-minute detention after school in the detention room. Students who fail to serve the detention within two days may be assigned to Saturday school, Wednesday night school, or in-school suspension. The student may receive a failing grade for the day.
2. Excessive Unexcused Absences from a Class. The Dean contacts student and parents/guardian to discuss appropriate consequences, which may include detention, Saturday school, Wednesday night school, in-school suspension, an attendance contract. A meeting with the student, parent, teacher, and dean will occur before withdrawal from the course is considered. Students removed from a course for repeated absences may be reassigned to a designated area, be enrolled in online courses, or have their schedules blocked for the remainder of the semester. In cases where students for whom withdrawal results in the student not meeting minimum course load requirements, student may be placed on a restricted schedule for the amount of time equivalent to the minimum credit requirements.

Students with multiple unexcused absences in a single school day may be immediately assigned to Saturday school, Wednesday night school, or in-school suspension.

Chronic Absence

Consistent, daily attendance at school is the biggest indicator of academic success for students, therefore WHS has implemented specific attendance practices.

When absenteeism is becoming an issue for a student, teachers will first contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to let them know that they are seeing a negative trend and then assign students mods to help get the student back on track. If the absenteeism continues, administration and counselors will work with the student and their family on an attendance contract. Finally, a student may be dropped from a course with a withdraw/failure (WF) if their attendance still does not improve. A WF will be a permanent mark on a student's transcript and will count towards a student's overall GPA.

PLEASE NOTE: School Excused, OSS, and ISS absences **WILL NOT** be figured into this total. Additionally, any extenuating medical conditions and long-term illness will be considered mitigating factors by administration and counselors when discussing a WF.

If you have any questions about this new attendance practice, please consult with your child's assigned administrator or counselor.

Absence Procedures

Notifying the School of Student Absence

When a student will be absent from school, parent/guardian should email or call the attendance office at (402) 343-2626, prior to 9 a.m. to report the student's absence. If routed to voicemail, parent/guardian should leave a message with the required information. This number can be accessed 24 hours a day.

In addition to requirements listed above, to be excused, all absences must be verified through a note, email, or phone call from the student's parent or guardian. Absences that are not verified by parents/guardians within three school days will be permanently recorded as Unexcused.

If the School Nurse and the student's parent agree that the student should go home, the nurse will issue a "Permit to Leave the Building." **Students who go home ill without first seeing the nurse may be marked Unexcused from class and the student's Dean will be notified.**

Counting Absences

For state reporting purposes, attendance is taken each class period (mod). Each period (mod) missed is counted in proportion to its share of the student's scheduled school day.

Absence due to Illness

Parents should keep children home whenever a child has a temperature greater than 100.0°F, is vomiting, or has diarrhea. Students should not return to school until they have been free of those symptoms—unassisted by medication—for 24 hours.

While attendance is important, keeping a sick child at home can protect the well-being of the child, other students, and our staff, and can help limit the spread of illness in the community.

Accommodating Religious Observances

One important feature of a welcoming school environment is a staff that deals sensitively with students who are absent from school for religious holidays. Even when they are allowed to make up missed work, such students often encounter intangible disadvantages that can affect their opportunities for success. Therefore, teachers are expected to plan instruction so as to avoid conflicts that leave students feeling torn between their school and religious obligations.

Because the dates of holidays are known well in advance, teachers will not, as a rule, schedule high-value exams, assignment due dates, or presentations of crucial material or activities when students will be absent for religious observances. Exceptions must be approved, in advance, by the building principal, and the teacher is required to provide reasonable accommodations that allow students to catch up on the missed information tests, assignments, and activities.

Preventing and Responding to Chronic Absence

In an attempt to minimize chronic absence, the Principal or Dean will act in the following progression:

Five Days of Absence

In cases where illness is not a primary factor, the building principal or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or individual who has legal or actual charge or control of a child when the student has accumulated five days (or the hourly equivalent of five days) of either excused or unexcused absences for the semester.

Ten Days of Absence

When a student has accumulated ten days (or the hourly equivalent of ten days) of either excused or unexcused absences for the semester, the building principal, designated school staff, the parent or guardian, and the student will cooperatively develop a plan of action designed to overcome barriers preventing regular attendance. The result of such meeting(s) shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance.

If, despite multiple efforts by the District to contact parents/guardians via telephone, email, or personal contact, the parent or guardian cannot be reached or refuses to participate with school staff in establishing the student's attendance plan, the student's SAT Team shall develop the plan.

Fifteen Days of Absence

Once an attendance plan has been established, District personnel shall continue to monitor the student's attendance and adjust the attendance plan as needed. The principal shall inform the parent(s)/guardian in writing if the student accumulates additional absences totaling fifteen days for the school year. Missing a class 15 times or more may result in removal from class and inability to earn credit for the class.

Referral to the County Attorney

The county attorney may be involved at any stage in the process of addressing excessive absenteeism. If, despite documented efforts made by District personnel to improve attendance, the student accumulates more than twenty days of unexcused absence (or its hourly equivalent) for the school year, the Principal may file a report with the county attorney. A documented illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney.

Truancy

Students who accumulate excessive absences may be considered truant. Truancy is a violation of school rules and subjects violators to measures specified in the Code of Conduct, as well as potential referral to the County Attorney.

Permit to Leave Building

A permit to leave the building is issued by either the attendance office or School Nurse to students who must leave the building during the school day. Leaving without obtaining such permit may result in disciplinary action.

To obtain a permit from the attendance office, a student must:

1. Be excused via a phone call, email, or note from home that can be verified by the attendance office.
2. When possible, notify teachers in advance. Every effort should be made to plan appointments in a manner to avoid missing class.
3. For appointments, please notify the attendance office prior to the start of the school day or at least 1 hour prior to picking up your student.

If a student must be tardy because of a medical or dental appointment at the beginning of a school day and obtains a permit on the day prior to the absence, the tardy will be excused. Ninth graders are granted a Permit to Leave the Building only for medical reasons and/or emergencies.

Advance Permission to Leave School (White Slip)

Students who anticipate an absence of 3 days or more should follow these steps:

1. At least three school days in advance of the absence, the student should bring a note of verification from the student's parent/guardian and given to the student's Dean for approval.
2. If the absence is approved, the Dean will explain the procedures to the student.
3. Once the Dean approves the absence the attendance office will issue a White Slip, which the student must have signed by all assigned teachers. All teacher signatures must be completed and returned to the attendance office at least 24 hours in advance of scheduled absences.
4. Teachers will sign the White Slip; however, they may indicate on the slip the potential impact that such a prolonged absence may have on the student's semester grade for that course. If there are such remarks made by the teacher, the attendance office will notify the administrator, who will then notify the student's parents. The student's parents must make the final decision as to whether the student will be absent.
5. Finals days are important for students, and attendance through all final exam periods is expected. When students absolutely must be absent, they should bring a note from a parent/guardian stating the date and reason for the absence, which must be approved by the student's Dean to be excused. **Students are encouraged to do this as far in advance as possible, but not less than 2 weeks prior to the first scheduled day of finals.** All students absent on finals days must make up work missed to receive credit.

Make-up Work (Excused Absences and Completion of Assignments)

Students are expected to make up all work missed during their absence. A recommended guideline is two days make-up time for each day of excused absence. If the absence is of long duration and the student finds it impossible to keep up with coursework, the dean and teacher will determine appropriate adjustments to instruction.

Attendance Required to Participate in Activities

Students must be in attendance for at least half the school day to participate in extracurricular activities or other school programs that day. Absences for school-sponsored events are not included. Failure to attend will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity. The Principal may grant participation in exceptional circumstances.

USE OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Visitors

For the safety of all students and staff, all visitors, including parents, are required to enter the building through the main entrance, sign in, and wear a visitor's nametag for the duration of the visit.

Parents

Parent visits to school during the school day must be balanced against the District's responsibility to control school property, maintain order, and foster a safe and appropriate learning environment for students and staff. The Principal shall have the discretion to limit access when it is determined that such access may interfere with any of these responsibilities.

Former Students

Former Westside students wishing to visit should do so only after school has been dismissed for the day.

School-Age Guests

Students are not permitted to bring school-age visitors to school with them.

Student Parking

With nearly 2,000 students and close to 200 staff members, parking space at Westside High School is extremely limited. Only students with parking permits are allowed to park in school lots; violators may be fined, booted, and/or towed. Carpooling, walking, and bicycling are encouraged.

Each year, a limited number of parking permits is made available to students, following the guidelines described below.

1. Seniors may purchase on-campus parking permits for \$40.
2. After seniors have had an opportunity to purchase parking permits, the school distributes the right to purchase any remaining permits to Juniors via lottery.
3. While a parking permit allows students to park in school lots, it does not guarantee its owner a parking spot.
4. Students eligible for parking passes will be notified via email when parking passes are available for sale. At the time of purchase, buyers must present
 - a. valid car registration
 - b. a valid driver's license
 - c. proof of current insurance
 - d. student identification
 - e. payment for permit or payment in advance via MySchoolBucks
5. Underclassmen with appropriate permits are allowed to park on school grounds during the day.
6. Numbered spots in any lot are reserved for faculty, traveling teachers, and other staff.
7. Unnumbered/unmarked parking stalls are the only areas authorized for student parking. Parking tags must be displayed at all times. Cars without tags will be ticketed (\$10). Habitual parking violations may result in car being booted (\$25).
8. Cars parked in unauthorized areas or on the grass will be ticketed and the permit holder fined. Those who repeatedly park illegally may have their cars booted or towed at the owner's expense. If a student believes he/she should not have been ticketed, the student should appeal in the Dean's office within five days of receiving the ticket.
9. Lost or stolen permits may be replaced for \$5 in the Deans' office.
10. Students must drive safely. Failure to do so may result in revocation of parking privileges.
11. Students parking in areas other than the school grounds must respect the law and the property of the owners.

Smoke-Free Environment

All Westside Community Schools buildings and grounds are smoke- and tobacco-free. All who attend school events, including athletic contests, are expected to abide by the District's policy.

The Student Code of Conduct prohibits the use or possession of any form of tobacco, tobacco or nicotine delivery device, or tobacco-product look-alike, e-cigarette or vapor ("vape") dispenser of any kind regardless of the substance, if any, that it contains. Students found to have violated this provision will face disciplinary consequences.

Care of School Property

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, supplies, and furniture supplied by the school. Students who disfigure property, break windows, or otherwise damage school property or equipment will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item.

As a matter of routine, students should

- pick up their own trash and the trash around them.
- recycle paper, pop cans, and plastic bottles whenever possible.
- not carry open containers of liquids in the hallways.

Bringing/Sending Food to School

Westside Community Schools promotes student wellness and safety by monitoring food provided at school for student consumption. To minimize the risk of exposing students to potentially harmful foods or allergens, any items other than those brought by students for their own consumption must be commercially prepared. In no case may homemade goods be shared or distributed for student consumption. Students or parents who have questions about these guidelines should consult with a building administrator before bringing or sending any food item to school.

Bulletin Boards

All notices, posters, or other communications must be approved by the building principal or designee and be signed before posting.

Textbooks

For some courses, the school district lends textbooks to students. Students should keep school textbooks covered, clean and protected, as students must return them at the end of the semester or school year. Students are expected to provide their own book covers.

The school may fine students up to the full cost of the textbook if there is abnormal wear or damage to any textbook lent to a student. Fines may also be assessed for lost or stolen textbooks. If a student returns a textbook after the book has been reordered, the fine may still be assessed.

Lockers

Students may obtain a locker assignment through the main office. Students are required to use their own lockers and should not change at any time, except as assigned by school staff in the main office. Students are responsible for the condition of their lockers, both inside and out, and may be fined for damage to lockers, regardless of whether the student used it. Lockers should be locked at all times. Lockers are school property and subject to search at any time. These expectations also apply to P.E. and athletic lockers.

Lab Safety Glasses

As required by law, approved safety glasses will be required of every student and teacher while participating in or observing class activities requiring eye protection. Eye protection is required in some vocational, technical, engineering and technology, science, and art classes.

Student Valuables

The District is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items brought to school by students. Students are encouraged to leave items of value at home.

Lost and Found

The school maintains a collection of Lost and Found items. Students who lose a textbook, sweatshirt, purse, or anything else should check the Lost and Found for the missing item. Due to the difficulty of maintaining a large Lost and Found collection, it is cleaned out at the end of each quarter, and unclaimed items are donated to charity.

Bicycles

Students are allowed to ride bicycles to and from school. Bicycles may not be ridden on campus; they should be walked whenever on District property. Because of heavy traffic near schools, students should be especially observant of safety rules. Students should keep their bicycles locked in the bike racks provided. Neither the school nor the District is responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged bicycles.

Skateboards

Skateboarding is not permitted on school grounds. Skateboards should be stored in a student's locker or in the dean's office during the school day.

Non-Licensed Vehicles

Non-licensed, motorized vehicles (go-peds, go-carts, mini-bikes, etc.) are not permitted on school grounds.

Phones

Telephones are placed at each teacher's desk. Students may not use teachers' phones without teacher permission. Students may also request to use the phone in the main office.

Dances

Ticket Sales

Westside High School has the following policy regarding the sale of tickets for school dances:

- All ticket sales for dances are done in advance of the dance through the main office and/or business office. No ticket sales at the event.
- Guests of Westside High School students must be in at least 9th grade and not older than 19 years of age.
- For guests to be approved, the Westside student must complete a form, provide the name of the person they are requesting to bring to the dance, the guest's telephone number, and indicate where the guest attends school. A school administrator from the guest's school must provide approval for the student to attend the WHS dance.
- To enter the dance, the Westside student will need to show his/her Westside Digital ID. The person they are bringing will also need his/her school ID card or some form of photo ID to be admitted.
- All students are subject to random Alcoblow® screening.
- Students who leave the dance may not return.

Accidents at School

The District does not provide health insurance coverage for students, as that is the responsibility of parents/guardian to provide. Parents are responsible for the medical bills, just as they would be if the student were hurt away from school.

Insurance

At the beginning of the school year, parents may enroll in an insurance program that covers a child traveling to and from school, within school buildings or grounds, and attending school-sponsored activities. Premiums for policies under this program are paid by the parent(s)/guardian.

Community Club

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. One way to do so is by joining the Westside High School Community Club. Parents can join and volunteer to assist with Community Club projects. Community Club meetings are open to all parents. Parents who would like to be involved with the Community Club should contact the Main Office for more information.

School Kitchen

To protect equipment, prevent injury and prevent cross-contamination of food preparation areas, school kitchens may not be used for any purpose unless under the direct supervision of a District Nutrition Services staff member. Due to state and federal regulations, there can be no exceptions to this policy.

Distribution of Flyers

Digital Distribution

Organizing and distributing thousands of flyers for external organizations in our schools each week is both labor-intensive and costly. Starting with the 2017-18 school year, Westside Community Schools moved to an all-digital system for distributing information from external organizations. Information is made available on the District website (westside66.org) and distributed electronically by schools at each principal's discretion. Distribution of flyers for District-related events is permitted. There is no charge to display electronic versions of flyers on the District website.

Flyer Booklet Distribution

To help inform all students and families about external organizations' activities and events, Westside Community Schools distributes activities booklets twice a year to all elementary school students—one in August and one in January. Organizations wishing to include a flyer in these booklets must meet certain requirements (see below), and all flyers must be approved by the Director of Communication and Engagement. Organizations submitting flyers for booklet distribution are charged fees to cover costs.

Guidelines for Inclusion in Flyer Booklet

- Organization distributing flyers must be a registered non-profit in the state of Nebraska
- Organization must submit an 8.5x11 file of flyer in PDF format via email (Please send to paul.brandi@westside66.net)
- Cost per flyer, per booklet, is \$100 (\$125 for 2-sided flyers). Flyer will also be posted on the Westside Community Schools website.
- Submission deadline for inclusion in August flyers booklet is July 1. The deadline for the January booklet is December 1.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

School resource officers (SROs) are police officers who work directly in the schools. They are responsible for working with school administrators, security staff and faculty on developing and implementing comprehensive safety plans to ensure schools are safe places for students to learn. Westside Community Schools has two SROs, who are shared with Westside Middle School and Westside High School, as part of a collaboration with the Omaha Police Department. Westside SROs also provide support and service to our Elementary buildings, as needed. The purpose of an SRO is to assist school officials in maintaining discipline, order, safety and a proper educational environment. The SROs are also an educational resource for teachers and students.

Video Surveillance

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations deemed appropriate by the Building and District administrators.

Notice is hereby given that video surveillance may occur on District property. In the event a video surveillance recording captures a student or other building user violating school policies or rules or local, state or federal laws, the video surveillance recording may be used in disciplinary proceedings against the student or other building user and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies.

Searches

The school exercises exclusive control over school property including, but not limited to, student lockers, desks, computer equipment, and other such property owned by the school. Students should not expect privacy when using school property. Periodic, random searches of lockers, desks, computers, and other such property may be conducted at the discretion of the Principal.

The following rules apply to searches of students and a student's personal property, and to the seizure of items in a student's possession or control:

1. School officials may conduct a search if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a crime or a school rule violation. The search is to be conducted in a reasonable manner under the circumstances.

2. Illegal items or other items reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety of others or a threat to educational purposes may be taken and kept by school officials. Any firearm or other weapon will be confiscated and delivered to law enforcement officials as soon as practicable.
3. Items which have been or are reasonably expected to be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process (that is, “nuisance items”) may be removed from student possession.

ACADEMICS

District Educational Competencies

Westside Community Schools students are expected to exhibit the following skills and talents upon graduation.

1. Effective Communicator
 - a. Writes and speaks clearly and articulately
 - b. Exchanges ideas and information through multiple forms of expression
 - c. Works collaboratively with others
 - d. Actively listens
2. Engaged Citizen
 - a. Respects self and others equally
 - b. Exhibits ethical and honest behaviors
 - c. Practices and values democratic ideals
 - d. Demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness of the global community
3. Critical and Creative Thinker
 - a. Creatively develops solutions to problems
 - b. Applies reason and analysis to make informed decisions
 - c. Employs resources appropriate to the task
4. Healthy Individual
 - a. Cultivates healthy habits and self-discipline
 - b. Accepts responsibility for personal choices, actions, and mistakes
 - c. Maintains healthy interpersonal relationships
 - d. Perseveres in the face of challenge and adversity
5. Lifelong Learner
 - a. Takes intellectual risks and displays curiosity for learning
 - b. Develops personal, academic and technical skills to adapt to change
 - c. Initiates and engages in learning

Graduation Requirements

To participate in commencement exercises or receive a Westside Community Schools diploma, a student must fully complete all requirements for graduation and complete other administrative requirements or conditions.

Diploma

To be eligible for graduation from Westside High School, a student must have completed the following requirements:

Course Requirements stipulate that a student earn a minimum of 210 credit hours in grades 9 through 12, inclusive. Within those credit hours, students must meet minimum requirements in English/Literature, Math, Social Studies, Science, Health and Physical Education, Business, Global/Multicultural, Fine Arts, and School Counseling. Credit hours are computed in accordance with Nebraska Department of Education regulations.

Diploma with Commendation (Through the class of 2024)

Westside High School offers students a choice between the traditional diploma and a Diploma with Commendation. Students who obtain the Diploma with Commendation receive special recognition at commencement and on their diplomas. Typically, roughly one-third of each graduating class earn the Diploma with Commendation.

To be eligible for a Diploma with Commendation, students must meet requirements for a regular diploma as well as additional coursework and service requirements. Complete details of all requirements for both types of diploma are included on subsequent pages of this Handbook.

Exceptions

The Board of Education may approve exceptions to these requirements, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. A complete record of the recommendation, and of action taken upon it by the Board, shall be included in the minutes. Candidates for graduation shall be presented to the Board of Education for approval.

A student who has not met requirements for graduation but who has attended school regularly may, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, be granted a Certificate of Attendance. Students receiving a Certificate of Attendance shall not be eligible to participate in graduation exercises.

Service Learning

Service Learning is an important component of the Westside Community Schools' graduation requirements. Service Learning is defined as active student participation in unpaid activities, which benefit other individuals, groups, community agencies, or the community at large.

Guidelines

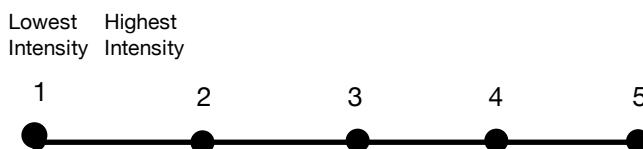
1. During the school year, students should obtain forms and pre-approval of service from their homeroom advisors.
2. Students may apply no more than 20 hours toward graduation for hours completed for political campaigns, non-profit haunted houses, and family/individual service.
3. Students may not obtain service learning hours by working for any for-profit organization or business, even if the student is unpaid. This includes, but is not limited to, dance and gymnastics studios, rental homes, businesses of family and/or friends, and for-profit haunted houses.
4. "Family/Individual" is one category of service, in which students may help a family member or acquaintance. Merely working for free does not count; recipients must have a demonstrable need for assistance. Examples of acceptable service would include help someone who is recovering from surgery or lawn mowing for an elderly neighbor. Neither babysitting nor household chores and responsibilities will receive service learning credit.
5. Students are permitted to count no more than eight hours per day for service projects (e.g., serving as a camp counselor, participating in mission trips or alternative breaks, etc.)

Deadlines

The deadline for submitting service hours completed during the summer is the last Friday in August immediately following the summer in which the service was completed. The deadline for submitting hours completed during first semester the last Friday in January. The deadline for submitting second semester hours is the First Friday in April for 12th grade students. The deadline for students in grades 9-11 is the first Friday in May.

Course Groupings

Course group numbers indicate the academic rigor and/or skill and knowledge levels build over the duration of the course. Courses are grouped by number, with Group 5 courses being the highest in intensity and Group 1 being least intense. Intensity is a combination of academic rigor, skill and knowledge building, and work assigned outside of class. Most courses are in Group 3 (grade level intensity). A higher group number indicates higher expectations.



Course Load Requirements

Course load requirements are in place to help students make satisfactory progress toward graduation. Load requirements vary, depending on the student's grade level. Therefore, 9th graders are scheduled in class more heavily than sophomores, sophomores more heavily than juniors, and juniors more heavily than seniors.

Freshmen	Freshmen must be registered for a course load placing them in class at least 35 mods per week (average is about 39 mods). Students select courses individually in consultation with middle school staff and a high school counselor.
Sophomores	Sophomores must be registered for a course load placing them in class a minimum of 32 mods per week (average is 36 mods).
Juniors	Juniors must be registered for a course load which places them in courses which have a minimum of 25 credit hours or in class 28 mods per week (average is 26 credits and 32 mods).
Seniors	Seniors must be registered for a course load which places them in courses which have a minimum of 23 credit hours or 25 mods per week (average is 24 credits).

All students, especially juniors and seniors, are encouraged to exceed these minimums and/or access other programs assisting with post-secondary transition.

Westside High School Requirements for Graduation (Commended through 2024 Latin System 2025 and Beyond)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS		
Knowledge Area	Requirements for Diploma	Additional Requirements for Diploma with Commendation
English/Literature	8 consecutive semesters of designated courses	AP English Literature or AP Language and Composition (must be one of the 8 required semester courses)
Math	6 semesters of math courses, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I (2 semesters) Geometry (2 semesters) Additional math electives (2 semesters) 	Additional math electives must include two semesters of Algebra/Trigonometry or Pre-Calculus
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government (1 semester) U.S. History (2 semesters) Additional social studies electives (3 semesters) 	No additional requirement
Science	6 semesters of social studies courses, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology (2 semesters) Natural Science (2 semesters) OR Physics (2 semesters) Additional science electives (2 semesters and must include courses from Earth/Space strand) 	2 additional semesters of science (8 total semesters), including at least one course from one of the four science strands: Biology, Natural Science/Physics, Earth/Space, and Chemistry.
Health and Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Living (1 semester) HPE Foundations or Advanced PE (3 semesters, 2 of which may be participation in interscholastic sports) 	No additional requirement
World Language	No requirement	4 semesters of any one language (9-12)
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Technology (1 semester) Personal Finance (1 semester) 	No additional requirement
Global/Multicultural	2 semesters	2 additional semesters
Fine Arts	No requirement	1 semester
School Counseling	Seminar (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades)	No additional requirement
Group 4-5 Course	No requirement	20 semester courses
Credit Hours	210	225
PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS		
Performance Area	Requirements for Diploma	Additional Requirements for Diploma with Commendation
Effective Communicator	Authentic demonstrations within identified courses	No additional requirement
Engaged Citizens		
Creative and Critical Thinker		
Healthy Individual		
Lifelong Learner		
Service Learning	80 hours	20 additional hours (100 total)
Cumulative GPA	No requirement	3.00

Honor Roll and Academic Letter

The Westside High School Academic Honor Roll is published following the end of the semester. To qualify for the Honor Roll, students must finish the semester with at least a 3.0 final grade point average (GPA). Students with a GPA of 3.75 or higher at the end of the semester will be named to the High Honor Roll and receive an academic letter. A student is disqualified from the Honor Roll if he/she does not earn at least 20 credits, has an incomplete, or fails any course that semester. Pass/fail credits do not count toward the 20 credits needed.

Grade Point Values	
Letter Grade	Point Value
A+	4.0
A	4.0
B+	3.5
B	3.0
C+	2.5
C	2.0
D+	1.5
D	1.0
F	0

Class Rank (Through the Class of 2024)

Westside uses “mark points” to compute class rank. See Class Rank and Mark Point Average in the Westside High School Course Planning Guide for educational planning for a complete explanation.

Class rank is determined by Total Rank Points (TRP), which is calculated by combining mark point average (MPA) and total mark points (TMP) using the following formula:

$$(MPA)^3 \times (TMP) = TRP$$

Students’ total rank points are placed in numerical order; the student with the most TRP is ranked number 1, the second-most number 2, etc. This formula rewards students who earn high grades while taking more courses and high-grouped courses.

The Latin System (Class of 2025 and Beyond)

Westside Community Schools is committed to recognizing the academic success of our students. Beginning with the class of 2025, we will recognize students’ academic success using a Latin, or “laude” system of recognition. The Latin system has established criteria for each level of success and is used at many colleges and universities. With this system, students will work toward a personal goal of academic achievement. Westside’s Latin system, paired with a weighted grade scale, encourages students to pursue course offerings that match student interest and are rigorous in nature.

Recognition Criteria

Summa Cum Laude “with the highest honor”: To graduate summa cum laude, a student must achieve a 4.25 or higher GPA based on a 4.0 weighted scale. This is the highest level of school recognition.

Magna Cum Laude “with high honor”: To graduate magna cum laude, a student must achieve at least 4.0 and less than a 4.25 GPA based on a 4.0 weighted scale.

Cum Laude “with honor”: To graduate cum laude, a student must achieve at least a 3.75 and less than a 4.0 GPA based on a 4.0 weighted scale.

Recognition at the graduation ceremony will be based on a student’s cumulative GPA at the end of the first seven semesters of high school. Recognition at the graduation ceremony will include notation in the graduation program, which is an additional way to acknowledge academic achievement. Any rounding in GPA calculations would be made to the hundredths place. The Latin system encompasses requirements of the commended diploma, and the commended diploma will be retired with the class of 2024.

Eligibility

Students must earn credit in a minimum of five mark-point earning courses each semester of high school. Any appeals for special circumstances must be made to the building principal.

Courses NOT eligible for mark points:

- Academic Support and Intervention courses (AL, ACP, Study Center, EL, etc.)
- Pass/Fail/Enrichment courses
- Independent Study courses
- Any Group 1 course
- Rule 18 or other external placement courses
- Homeschool transfer credit courses

Transfer Credits

- High School courses taken at the middle school level appear on the transcript to indicate the course has been taken in 8th grade. The course will have an (8) next to the course name and will earn no credit toward high school graduation and will be marked as “Pass”. This is most likely to happen in math and world language. The course will not count toward cumulative high school GPA or Latin system honors.

- Transfer credits from an accredited high school will be evaluated on an individual student basis. The transfer credit will be assigned the weight of the closest counterpart at Westside High School. Consistent with current practice, final decisions on transfer credit will be made by the district.

Weighting of Grades

Additional course weight is assigned to Group 4 (Honors/Dual Enrollment) and Group 5 (Advanced Placement) courses. Both Group 4 and Group 5 courses are considered to be more rigorous in nature. Additional weight is assigned to Group 4 and Group 5 courses to encourage students to take more rigorous coursework by minimizing risk of lowering the GPA and by providing an incentive to maximize the cumulative GPA.

The table below outlines the mark points assigned based on student performance in Group 1- 5 courses at Westside High School.

	A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F
Group 5	5	5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	0
Group 4	4.5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	0
Group 2-3	4	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	0
Group 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Sample GPA calculation

GPA Example 1 - Grade 9 Student with 2 honors courses				
Course	Grade	Credits	Mark Points Per Credit	Total MP Earned
Honors English 1	A	4	4.5	18
Biology	A	5	4.0	20
Honors Geometry	A	5	4.5	22.5
Global Geography	A	4	4.0	16
Spanish 2	A	5	4.0	20
Information Technology	A	4	4.0	16
Sports Skills	A	3	4.0	12
Theater 1	A	4	4.0	16
		34		140.5

Homeroom Advisor Program

Every student is assigned a homeroom advisor upon entering Westside High School. Students meet with their advisors in homeroom to gather information or get answers to questions. The advisor is important to the student as he/she helps with preregistration, communication, and graduation requirements. Also, the advisor may work closely with the student and the parents. Both students and parents are encouraged to bring questions or concerns to the advisor. Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, Westside High School will be moving to an alphabetical based system for both counselors and homerooms. Homerooms will be divided up alphabetically and by grade level. These changes will allow us to provide better service to both students and families.

Homework

Purposeful homework is an essential component of the instructional process in the Westside Community Schools. The purposes of homework are: (1) to help in the development of independent work procedures and study habits; (2) to aid in the acquisition of knowledge; (3) to assist in the mastery of skills; and (4) to encourage creative effort and pursuit of individual interests. Homework should provide reinforcement and extension of class instruction and should serve as a basis for further study and preparation for future class assignments.

Secondary school homework assignments should recognize that more time and individual student initiative are expected in order to meet increased demands. Homework assignments for exceptional students should reflect the needs of such students. Homework is assigned at the discretion of the teacher, based on course intensity, the sound instructional practice, and the teacher's professional judgment.

Students or parents with questions about homework for a particular course should contact the teacher. They should also be aware that some teachers require all homework to be completed before tests can be taken.

PowerSchool and Monitoring Student Progress

The Westside Community Schools uses the PowerSchool student information system to maintain education records for each student. Using their individual PowerSchool accounts, parents can monitor student progress in specific courses or content areas, view attendance records, and check lunch balances. PowerSchool helps parents keep up with what's going on at school and can serve as a starting point for ongoing conversation between parent and child.

Parents who don't know or remember their login information may request that information by sending an email to powerschool.support@westside66.net. Children's name(s) must accompany all requests.

Failing Grades

Students who are failing may be assigned to IMCs during independent mods when they have two or more failing quarter grades. Junior and Senior passes may be voided for students with two or more failing quarter grades.

Report Cards

Official grades for transcript purposes are stored each semester. Parents will be notified via email when final grades are complete and will be directed to check semester grades via PowerSchool. Parents will also be notified of in progress grades prior to parent teacher conferences in October and March.

Incompletes

Teachers will not assign an incomplete grade at the end of a semester. If a student has a legitimate reason to complete work after the end of the semester, the student's current grade will be entered for the grade and then adjusted after completing the remaining coursework.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held at the end of 1st and 3rd quarters. Please check the calendar for specific conference dates. Parents/guardians are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Other conferences may be scheduled as needed by a teacher or parents/guardians.

Schedule Changes/Requests for Dropping or Adding a Class

Students register for classes in the spring for the following year. A student will have two opportunities to select courses:

1. Students select and finalize courses during spring registration.
2. Following spring registration, students can adjust courses based on conflicts in their schedule.

Course changes after the spring are only allowed under the following circumstances:

1. If a course was completed during summer school.
2. If a course was failed during the previous school year.
3. If there is a schedule conflict that cannot be adjusted without dropping or changing a course.
4. If a student needs a course to meet graduation requirements.

Dropping a course after the first 10 days of the semester

1. Will result in a Withdraw Failure (WF) which will appear on a student transcript and be included in GPA calculations.
2. Requests to drop a course will be initiated by the student to their assigned school counselor.
3. Students will need to complete the WHS Schedule Change Form using their school email account in order for their request to be processed.

Retaking a Course for Credit

As a general rule, students are not allowed to retake a course for additional credit; a few exceptions are: Current Events, Warrior Choir, Strength & Conditioning 2, Sports Performance, Band, and Mindfulness; counselors have more information about specific courses.

To retake a course to improve a grade, a student must:

1. Enroll in exactly the same course previously taken (same course and group number). Exceptions must be administratively approved prior to enrolling in the course.
2. After successful completion of the course, the student must contact their assigned counselor to have the lower grade removed.

Adjustment to Rank and GPA

If a student previously received credits for the course, credits attempted or earned will not be increased. Grade points and class rank totals will be adjusted when the next semester's class ranks are recalculated.

Independent Study

Independent Study is a student-initiated project pursued on a voluntary basis. It includes major independent work for credit as a part of a regularly scheduled course or a major project for credit that is not offered in the regular curriculum.

1. Requests for independent study must be presented to Mrs. Lois Rasgorshek prior to the beginning of the project.
2. Variable credits are available for independent study; projects are typically assigned one to three hours of credit per semester.
3. Independent study projects must have
 - a. specific written objectives;
 - b. deadlines for completion;
 - c. a recommendation for amount of credit to be awarded if successfully completed;
 - d. objectives developed by the student and advisor cooperatively;
 - e. progress discussions scheduled periodically.

4. Projects are graded with the student signing a Pass/Fail contract. Failure to complete the project will result in a grade of F. Grading will be accomplished via a conference between the advisor and the student. Because Independent Study is graded on a pass/fail basis, it will not effect the student's GPA or Mark Point Average.

Courses Not Taken at Westside High School

With few exceptions, all required courses for graduation must be taken at Westside High School. Courses for credit not taken at Westside High School must receive approval from the Principal or designee prior to enrolling or participating in said course; courses taken without pre-approval will not receive Westside High School credit(s). All requests must be made in writing to the student's counselor. At the time of approval, course credits and grouping will be determined. Transcripts of new students transferring to WHS will be evaluated and specific graduation requirements needed will be communicated to the student and parents/guardian by the student's counselor.

National Honor Society

Westside's Honor Society is a chapter of the national organization and is bound by its rules and regulations. Eligibility for membership is based on scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Juniors who have a mark point average of 6.40, and have no failures or incompletes on their records are eligible for induction into the Society. In addition, Juniors must have completed 60* (adjusted for COVID-19, as communicated via email) hours and Seniors must have completed 80* hours of approved Service Learning. These requirements must be completed by the third Friday in January. No exceptions will be made for this deadline.

Selection further depends on consideration of character, leadership, and service. Staff members are given National Honor Society definitions of "character" and "leadership" and are asked to give specific evidence of how any eligible student has not demonstrated these qualities. Students are asked to complete a Student Activity/Service Information Form and complete an essay on leadership. School activities/service and additional community service beyond the required number of hours are recorded by the student and rated by the appropriate sponsor. A total of ten approved points on this form is required for induction. Seven of the ten points must come from activities at Westside High School. Activities for which the student is paid or the student pays to participate will not be considered. A faculty committee then reviews each student's qualifications and recommends accordingly. Students and parents with questions about NHS should contact the chapter advisor, Mrs. Charlotte Weyler (weyler.charlotte@westside66.net).

Early Graduation Procedures

Any student contemplating early graduation must begin planning with her/his counselor during the junior year or sooner. Counselors have very specific instructions to follow to assure successful completion of requirements including a meeting with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the student's path to graduation and post-graduation plans.

Withdrawal from School

If it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from school, the following process is required.

1. Parent/guardian must provide an administrator or counselor with notice of intent to transfer before the check-out process can be initiated.
2. Transferring students should report to the dean's office to receive a checkout form. The completed form must be returned to the dean's office.
3. Students must turn in all books, district issued technology and all other equipment to each teacher and have the teacher sign the checkout form, as well as all IMC's, the media center and technology department.
4. Student must pay all fees and fines.
5. For transferring students, the School Counseling Office will send a transcript directly to the new school upon the new school's request.
6. If a student is withdrawing from school completely, an affidavit may need to be filed, a meeting with school personnel held, and the appropriate forms filed with the Nebraska State Department of Education.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Enrollment Services

Returning Student Registration

Parents must complete the Returning Student Registration for each of their children every year, to verify that the school has current address and contact information, to update each student's health information, and to provide families with information about programs and services offered by the school. The Update is made available for completion in mid-July and should be completed by parents before the first day of school. Because the Update includes technology agreement forms, **students will not receive school-issued technology devices until the student's parent/guardian has completed and submitted his or her Returning Student Registration.** Parents with questions about the online forms may contact their building secretary or the Welcome Center (powerschool.support@westside66.net).

Change of Address and Emergency Contact Information

In situations where a student or parent's home address OR emergency contact information changes after completing the Returning Student Registration, parents should inform the Welcome Center (enrollment@westside66.net or 402-390-2100) no later than five days after the change occurs.

Birth Certificate Requirement

State law requires that a *certified* copy of a student's birth certificate be provided within 30 days of enrollment in a Nebraska school for the first time. Parents/guardians may obtain a certified copy from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which the child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from Health Records Management, P.O. Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a per-certificate fee.

If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These documents could include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

Please note: Documents parents often receive from the hospital may look like a birth certificate, but it is not a certified copy. A certified copy has a raised seal of the issuing state on it and is signed by the appropriate state official.

International Exchange Students

The Westside Community Schools, at its discretion, may accept up to four international exchange students per school year, and only at the high school level. Exchange students must be at least 16 years old, but not older than 19 years old, on or by September 1st of the school year in which the student enrolls in the District and must not have graduated from high school (or an equivalent educational institution) prior to enrollment in the District.

Host families must reside within District boundaries; however, preference will be given to resident families who have at least one child enrolled in a District school concurrently with the exchange student. Exchange students must reside with the host family for the duration of their enrollment in the District.

Enrollment of exchange students new to the United States shall be made only at the start of a school semester. All arrangements for admission, including regular enrollment and scheduling processes, must be concluded prior to the first day of the semester.

Westside High School shall accept complete student application portfolios on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning on September 1 of the preceding the school year of attendance. Only students participating in long-term programs with a minimum duration of 26 weeks and which are certified through the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) will be considered for acceptance.

For complete guidelines, or to inquire about the possibility of enrolling an exchange student at Westside High School, please contact the counseling office.

Health Services

Health Office

Each school Health Office operates under the supervision of the Principal and a registered nurse contracted from Children's Hospital and Medical Center. The Health Office is also staffed by a District-employed Health Assistant. Students who become ill, are injured, or develop some other health concern at school should report to the Health Office. The School Nurse and/or Health Assistant will assess the student's condition and contact parents regarding next steps.

Parents should notify the School Nurse or Health Assistant of any health concerns or changes in their child's health status. Students should contact their parents about a health concern from the Health Office, not the classroom. Parents may call the Health Office at any time with questions or concerns at (402) 343-2624.

Student Illnesses

Health Office staff will notify parents/guardian when a student needs to be sent home from school due to illness. Conditions requiring a student be sent home include a temperature greater than 100.0°F, vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rashes, or on determination by the school nurse that the child's condition prevents meaningful participation in the educational program, presents a health risk to the child or others, or that medical consultation is warranted unless the condition resolves. Students should not return to school until they have been free of those symptoms—unassisted by medication—for 24 hours.

Parents should complete the online Back-to-School Update before the start of school each year to verify that emergency daytime phone numbers are current so that parents can be reached if their child becomes ill or is injured while at school. Parents should also inform the School Nurse or Health Assistant of health-related information they feel is important for each 's safety and success at school.

Medication at School

Medication should be brought to school only when it is not possible to arrange for administration outside of school hours. All prescription and over-the-counter medications, including medicated creams, eye drops, eardrops, and herbal products must be kept in their original containers in the Health Office. Students are not permitted to keep any type of medication with them or in their lockers. The only exception is for students who must carry emergency medications approved by school personnel.

A medication authorization form must be completed for any medication taken at school. These may be obtained from the Health Office or on the school website in the Health section. The physician portion of the medication form must be completed for any non-prescription medication that may be needed at school for more than two weeks and prescription medications needed for any length of time.

Guidelines for Administering Medication.

When it is necessary for students to take or have medication available at school, parents/guardians must provide a signed, written consent for the student to be given medication at school. Consent forms are available at the school health office or on the District website. Parents should work with the School Nurse or Health Assistant to establish a health management plan for children with asthma, diabetes, or other significant health issues who are capable of self-managing their conditions. (Written verification from a physician that the student is able to self-carry and self-manage.) Unexpired medications must be provided to the school by the parent/guardian in the pharmacy- or manufacturer-labeled container. Repackaged medications will not be accepted.

As noted above, all medications require a physician's authorization to be given at school. The amount of medication provided to the school should not, at any time, exceed a two-week supply.

Health Screening

Children in Kindergarten through 4th grade, as well as children in 10th grade are screened for vision, hearing, dental defects, height and weight. Students entering the Student Assistance Program (SAP) at any grade level, and those about whom health concerns are identified to the School Nurse, may also be screened. Parents who do not wish their child to participate in the school screening program must communicate this in writing to the school health office at the start of the school year. Because Nebraska statutes require school-age screening, parents who remove their children from the screening program must submit to the school by December 1 either findings from an alternate medical provider or a letter from a physician stating that the student has been seen within the immediately preceding six months.

Physical and Visual Examination

Evidence of a physical examination and a visual evaluation is required within six (6) months prior to entrance into seventh grade and, in the case of transfer from out of state, to any other grade. The physical examination is to be completed by a physician, a physician's assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse; the visual evaluation is to be completed by any of the foregoing or an optometrist. A parent or guardian who objects to the physical examination and/or visual evaluation may submit a written statement of refusal for his or her child. Waiver forms are available in the school health office. Additional physical examination requirements exist for students participating in athletic participation.

Immunizations

Students must show proof of immunization to enroll in school. Students who do not comply with immunization requirements will not be permitted to continue in school. Students with medical conditions or sincerely held religious beliefs which do not allow immunizations must complete a waiver statement or affidavit. Forms are available in school health offices or on the District website. **Unimmunized students may be excluded from school in the event of a disease outbreak.**

Counseling Services

Westside counselors are masters-degree-level professionals who are trained to provide a variety of services in the counseling domains of academic, career and personal/social. All students meet with their counselors on a regular basis regarding their future coursework, college or other post-secondary plans, and career interests. Students are also encouraged to visit with their counselor about personal/social concerns whenever needed. Counselors are available to students before, during, and after school either on a walk-in basis or by appointment.

Students are required to complete seminar classes in grades 9 and 12. These classes focus on grade-appropriate topics, such as orientation to high school in freshman seminar, course scheduling, academic and career planning, and post-secondary planning. In addition to senior seminar, seniors meet individually with their counselors to work on specific steps needed to achieve the student's individual plans following graduation.

Evidence-Based Counseling

Westside staff employ evidence-based model of school counseling. Evidence-based school counseling is the deliberate use of the best available data in planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling interventions and programs.

Bullying Prevention Curriculum

Westside's bullying prevention curriculum is a collaborative effort of all staff, led by counselors. The purpose of the bullying prevention curriculum is to provide specific information to students on bullying behaviors and interventions.

Teachers and counselors integrate these concepts into all areas of curriculum and school interactions. Helping students understand their behavior choices and the consequences of their choices is the responsibility of all adults in the school.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

In partnership with Children's Behavioral Health, Westside Community Schools offers a student assistance program to all Westside Community Schools students. This partnership is designed to identify and address the mental health needs of students and support families who might not otherwise have access to professional mental health services outside of the school setting.

Through the SAP, District students are eligible to receive mental health assessment/ counseling sessions. Westside educators may refer students and families to Children's Behavioral Health experts or families can self-refer by calling [402-955-3900](tel:402-955-3900) to schedule a consultation for their child.

Student with Disabilities: Special Education

Westside Community Schools has specific responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Nebraska Rules 51 and 52, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to identify, evaluate and provide free, appropriate public education for qualified children with disabilities. These laws define a child with a disability as any child who:

- Has a mental, emotional or physical disability; and
- Because of the disability, needs special education and related services.

Disability includes, but is not limited to: autism, emotional disability, hearing impairment, other health impairments, specific learning disability, mild, moderate or severe sensory impairment, orthopedic impairment, preschool moderate delay, preschool severe delay, preschool speech/language delay, speech language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment.

Students with Disabilities: Section 504

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, Westside Community Schools recognizes its responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. Discrimination against any person with a disability will not knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system. Federal and state laws entitle certain rights to the parent of a child who may need or is receiving special education services. Some of these rights include

1. Eligible children aged 0-21 must receive a free, appropriate public education at no expense to the parents (this may include services in a private or nonpublic school in some cases.)
2. The right to educational services that are based on an evaluation of the child's special needs and the educational performance in school.
3. The right to receive specialized instruction or services specially designed to meet the child's individual educational needs.
4. The right to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities unless determined by your child's team that such participation would be inappropriate and/or not in your child's best interest as documented in the educational plan.
5. The right of parents or guardians to be included in making decisions about their child's educational needs and to approve the educational plans for their child.

If you have an infant, toddler, or pre-Kindergartener and believe the child may have developmental delays or disabilities, please contact the Westside Early Development Network at 402-390-8207. Information regarding school-age special education services can be obtained from the school principal. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the District, he or she may have the right to request an independent evaluation or a hearing with an impartial hearing officer to contest the determination. If there are questions, please feel free to contact the director of Special Services, Kami Jessop, at 402-390-2100.

Transportation Services

Parent Responsibility

Unless otherwise specified in District Policy, parents are responsible for providing transportation for their children to and from school.

Notification When Not Riding

The parents of any student who will NOT be riding on any day must call **Chief Bus Service (402-392-2144)** prior to 6:30 a.m. Repeated failure to provide such notice may result in suspension or termination of transportation.

Pick-up and Drop-off Locations

Pick-up locations for students using District transportation to travel to and from school will be designated at least annually by the Office of Student Services.

Transportation in Inclement Weather

Transportation is not provided on days when school is not in session. The District typically announces weather-related school closings no later than 6:30 a.m. Announcements are shared via a major radio and TV stations, Facebook, and Twitter. Parents/guardians can also sign up for voice, text, and email notifications.

If You Move

Parents must notify the Office of Student Services (402-390-2107) of all address changes.

Evacuation Drills

Student emergency evacuation drills are conducted twice per school year per route. Chief Transportation and the Office of Special Services will develop effective emergency evacuation plans for students whose disabilities may impede conventional evacuation methods.

Use of Video Recorders

To monitor student behavior and promote order, safety, and security, video cameras are used on District vans and buses transporting students. Due to the privacy rights of other students, parents/ guardians are not allowed to view bus recordings.

Transportation For Resident Students

Chief Bus Service provides service to and from Westside High School from several areas of our school district. This is a parent pay service and parent/guardian must contact Chief Bus to arrange transportation. Contact Chief Bus at 402-392-2144 for current rates or to purchase a pass. Route schedules can be found by contacting Chief Bus Service or the Dean's office at Westside High School at 402-343-2600.

Pick-up and drop-off of resident students outside of District boundaries is not provided.

Transportation For Non-Resident Students

Option Enrolled Students

Option students who qualify for free lunches shall be eligible for either free transportation or transportation reimbursement as follows.

For the 2023-2024 school year, free transportation shall be offered to those option students who qualify for free lunch and live south of State Street, north of Q Street and east of Interstate 680. Such students will be offered, prior to the start of the school year (or within a designated period of time, if option enrollment is approved after the start of school), the opportunity to sign up for transportation and a deadline for acceptance.

Requests for transportation received after the deadline, as well as requests received for changes to transportation already being provided, will be considered on a periodic basis as determined by the administration.

Upon mutual agreement of the District and the parent, reimbursement may be provided in lieu of free transportation for those students in the amount set forth by law.

Option Enrollment Route Changes

Route Change Schedule		
Quarter	Deadline	Route Takes Effect
1	July 1	First day of school
2	October 1	First day of 2nd quarter
3	December 1	First day of 3rd quarter
4	March 1	First day of 4th quarter

Due to the complexity of Option Enrollment route configuration, routes are set up in July and then adjusted only quarterly. Change requests must be submitted in writing (preferably via email), to Julie Fumagalli (fumagalli.julie@westside66.net).

Parents/guardians of eligible students wishing to start or change transportation must submit requests no later than the quarterly deadline. Requests received after deadlines will be carried over to the next quarter.

Transportation of Homeless Students

Transportation shall be provided to children and youths determined by the District to be homeless, as required by law.

Comparable Service

Transportation shall be provided to homeless children and youths comparable to that provided to students who are not homeless.

School of Origin

When a homeless child or youth attends the school of origin, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin upon request of the parent or guardian of the homeless child or youth, or upon request of the Homeless Liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth. If the homeless child or youth relocates out of the District but continues to be enrolled in the District based on it being the school of origin, the District shall negotiate with the school district in which the child or youth is residing to develop a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If agreement is not reached, the responsibility and cost for transportation shall be shared equally.

Elimination of Barriers

Transportation shall be provided when necessary to eliminate barriers to school enrollment and to the child's or youth's full participation in the educational program of the school and retain children and youths experiencing homelessness.

Transportation Conduct

Westside's Student Code of Conduct (Board Policy 5300) extends to students' use of district-provided transportation. The policy is available on the District website, is included in this Handbook, and is posted at all District schools.

Special Conduct Rules for Riding District Transportation

Every Westside student who rides with us deserves a safe and pleasant trip. Please remember that school transportation is a privilege, not a right. These rules are provided so that all may enjoy their ride. Parents should review and discuss the rules with their child(ren). **Students who violate these rules or the Student Code of Conduct while riding may have their transportation privileges suspended or revoked.**

All students riding on District transportation are required to follow these Rules:

At All Times

Students and parents must:

- Immediately follow all instructions by the driver.
- Be respectful toward everyone, especially drivers and students.

When Waiting for the Vehicle

- Be at your stop five minutes before scheduled pick-up time. Drivers are not permitted to go back for students who miss the bus.
- Be mindful of traffic; wait at least six feet away from the street, and don't push, shove, or chase others while waiting.

When Boarding/Exiting the Vehicle

- Line up at the spot designated by the driver; stay back until vehicle is completely stopped.
- Don't push or crowd others; let younger students board first.

When Riding on the Vehicle

- Don't eat or drink while on the vehicle.
- Items and conduct not permitted at school aren't allowed on vehicles; put belongings on your lap or under your seat.
- Personal electronics may be used only with headphones or ear-buds as long as music is not audible to others.
- Speak at a reasonable volume; don't do anything that might distract the driver. Be silent at railroad tracks, so drivers can listen for trains.
- Keep all body parts to yourself and inside the vehicle; do not throw objects, either in or out of the vehicle.
- Stay seated and face forward while vehicle is moving, with both feet on the floor in front of you—not in the aisle.
- Don't open windows without permission; use emergency exits only during supervised drills or real emergencies.
- Don't damage the vehicle or the property of others. Parents must pay for damage caused by their child(ren).

When Exiting the Vehicle

- Stay seated until the bus stops; exit in a prompt, orderly manner.
- Take your belongings with you. Neither the District nor Chief is responsible for items left behind.
- Use handrails whenever exiting the bus; be careful when stepping down, especially when steps are wet.
- If crossing the street, cross in front of bus. Walk at least six feet from the side of bus and then at least ten feet in front of bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, don't try to pick it up before telling the driver, because he/she may not be able to see you.

Student Questions and Answers about Riding the Bus**Q: Why do I need a bus pass?**

A: Providing bus transportation costs money. Bus passes ensure that only those who should be on the bus are riding the bus. Additionally, it helps the bus company ensure that there are enough seats on the bus for those who sign up for it. Finally, bus passes help drivers get to know the names of those riding the bus and keep track of who is riding.

Q: When do I need to carry or show my bus pass?

A: You should have your bus pass with you at all times. You must show your pass whenever the bus driver, teacher, or other school or bus company employee asks to see it.

Q: When will I get my bus pass?

A: You will receive a bus pass when you pay for the pass at Chief Bus Service, 3111 South 67th Street, Omaha, NE 68106.

Q: What if I forget my bus pass?

A: Before this happens ask your parents: "If I forget my pass, should I walk home? Who should I call to come and get me?" Your pass is your responsibility. If you forget your pass, you may request a temporary bus pass in the dean's office.

Q: What if I lose or can't find my bus pass?

A: Your first replacement pass will cost \$1.00. Additional passes are \$5.00

Q: Can the bus driver make me sit in a certain seat?

A: Yes. It is the bus driver's responsibility to make sure you are a responsible passenger and that everyone is safe. Drivers may assign a seat to any student who may be distracting to the driver. If you refuse to comply with the driver's request to move to an assigned seat, you will be written up by the bus driver, and the report will be given to the Principal. Your parents/guardian will be called, and you may lose your bus privileges, either temporarily or permanently.

Q: How early do I need to be at my bus stop?

A: At least five minutes before your scheduled pickup time. Buses will not wait if you are late. If you miss the bus, it will be your parent/guardian's responsibility to get you to school or home.

STUDENT RIGHTS, CONDUCT, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Student Code of Conduct

Students of Westside Community Schools represent themselves, their families, their school, and the Westside Community. It is the intent of this Code of Conduct to promote responsible behavior among all students at school and in the community. This policy applies to all secondary and elementary students.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

"Short-term suspension" means the exclusion of a student from attendance in all schools within the District for a period not to exceed five school days.

"Long-term suspension" means the exclusion of a student from attendance in all schools within the District for a period exceeding five school days but less than twenty school days.

"Expulsion" means exclusion from attendance in all schools within the District (except the location designated for alternative education) for a period not exceeding the remainder of the semester in which the expulsion took effect, and in addition, the next full semester or other additional length of time to the extent permitted by the Nebraska Student Discipline Act.

"Mandatory reassignment" means the involuntary transfer of a student to another school in the District in connection with any disciplinary action.

"Other disciplinary action" includes, but is not limited to, open mod in-school suspension (applicable to high school only), in-school suspension, short and long-term restrictions on a student's participation in school sponsored activities, clubs, and athletic programs, temporary or permanent loss of privileges to ride on school-provided busses, vans or other transportation, student counseling, parent conferences, rearrangement of schedules, requiring a student to be in school other than regular school hours to do additional work, and requiring a student to receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation.

"Harassment" on the basis of sex includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature and unwelcome verbal, written, or physical advance or suggestion of a sexual nature. Harassment on the basis of race, national origin, disability, age, religious beliefs, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender, or marital status includes, but is not limited to, any verbal or written statements to or about an individual which ridicules, slurs, mocks, derides, disparages, or makes fun of the individual because of his or her race, national origin, disability, age, religious beliefs, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender, or marital status.

"Bullying" is as defined in Board Policy 5310.

"Firearm", as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, means (a) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (c) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (d) any Destructive Device.

"Destructive Device" includes (a) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or device similar to any of these devices; (b) any type of weapon by whatever name known which will, or which may be, readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and (c) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in (a) or (b) and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

"Dangerous weapon" includes, without limitation, firearms, knives and switchblades (regardless of blade length), B.B. guns, stun guns, air-soft guns, ammunition, pipes, chains, brass knuckles (or any similar device made of another material), or any item that has the appearance of a Dangerous Weapon or that is portrayed by the student as a Dangerous Weapon.

"Under the influence" of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor has a less strict meaning than under criminal law; for purposes of this policy the term means any level of impairment and includes the odor of alcohol or controlled substance on the breath or person of a student.

"Hazing" is any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any school organization. Hazing activities include, but are not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, an act of sexual penetration, an exposure of the genitals of the body done with the intent to affront or alarm any person, a lewd fondling or caressing of the body of another person, forced and prolonged calisthenics, prolonged exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or harmful substance not generally intended for human consumption, prolonged sleep deprivation, or any brutal treatment or the performance of any unlawful act that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any person. For purposes of school rules, hazing also includes any activity expected of someone joining a group, team, or activity that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate; personal servitude; restrictions on personal hygiene; yelling, swearing and insulting new members/rookies; being forced to wear embarrassing or

humiliating attire in public; consumption of vile substances or smearing of such on one's skin; binge drinking and drinking games; sexual simulation and sexual assault;

"Sexual assault" means sexual assault in the first degree as defined in section 28-319, sexual assault in the second degree as defined in section 28-320, sexual assault of a child in the second or third degree as defined in section 28-320.01, or sexual assault of a child in the first degree as defined in section 28-319.01, as such sections now provide or may hereafter from time to time be amended;

"Profane, vulgar or abusive" language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon sex, race, disability, national origin, or religion or any other protected class under law.

STUDENT CONDUCT

I. ON SCHOOL GROUNDS/AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES/SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

- A. **Prohibited Conduct.** The following conduct set forth in Paragraphs 1-26 constitutes Prohibited Conduct if the conduct occurs on school grounds, a school-sponsored activity or athletic event, or in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by Westside Community Schools being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee. The conduct set forth in Paragraph 9 also constitutes Prohibited Conduct regardless of where the conduct occurs.
1. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes, or making any communication that a reasonable recipient would interpret as a serious expression of an intent to harm or cause injury to another person;
 2. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving property;
 3. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to any person;
 4. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student or making any threat which causes or may be expected to cause a disruption to school operations;
 5. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon, including, but not limited to dangerous weapons;
 6. Engaging in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in section 28-401 of the Nebraska statutes, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in section 53-103 of the Nebraska statutes, or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor;
 7. Public indecency as defined in section 28-806 of the Nebraska statutes, except that the definition of public indecency applies only to students at least twelve years of age;
 8. Engaging in bullying as defined in Board Policy 5310;
 9. Sexual assault or attempted sexual assault of any person if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person, including sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults which occur off school grounds not at a school function, activity, or event.;
 10. Engaging in any other activity prohibited by the laws of the State of Nebraska or the City of Omaha which activity constitutes a danger to any person or that interferes with school purposes;
 11. Harassment or discrimination against any person on the basis of the individual's race, national origin, sex, disability, age, religious beliefs, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender, or marital status;
 12. Retaliation against any person for reporting or asserting a claim of harassment, discrimination or bullying;
 13. Possession or use of a cell phone or other electronic device in violation of rules contained in the Parent-Student Handbook;
 14. Behavior that constitutes a danger to any other person or that is disruptive to, or seriously interferes with, class work, school activities, or school transportation;
 15. Participating in hazing or being present and having knowledge that hazing that is occurring even if not directly participating;
 16. Plagiarism, cheating, or other academic dishonesty;

17. A repeated violation of any rules and standards in this Code of Conduct, including paragraphs 18-26, if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes;
18. Gambling;
19. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, that is profane, vulgar or abusive;
20. Insubordination, dishonesty, or gross disrespect to teachers, school officials, other school employees, volunteers, or bus/van drivers;
21. Skipping school, home room, or regulated time, being tardy, or being out of the building without permission;
22. Use or possession of any form of tobacco, tobacco or nicotine delivery device, or tobacco-product look-alike, e-cigarette or vapor ("vape") dispenser of any kind regardless of the substance, if any, that it contains;
23. Possession or use of any mood-altering or behavior-affecting substance regardless of whether possession or use is unlawful under the laws of the State of Nebraska;
24. Violation of student dress code, or clothing that is lewd or indecent, vulgar or plainly offensive, or that school officials reasonably conclude could materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school, or that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use.
25. Intentionally making a false report or claim of harassment, discrimination or bullying;
26. Violation of the Internet Acceptable Use Responsibility Agreement or any computer use agreement;

B. Disciplinary Action for Prohibited Conduct on School Grounds, at a School-Sponsored Activity or Athletic Event, or in a Vehicle Being Used for School Purposes.

Prohibited Conduct described in paragraphs (1) through (17) above constitutes grounds for short or long-term suspension, expulsion, mandatory reassignment, and/or other disciplinary action.

Prohibited Conduct described in paragraphs (18) through (26) above constitutes grounds for short-term suspension and/or other disciplinary action. Alternatives to suspension or expulsion will be imposed against students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from required school activities.

The Board specifically determines that the types of conduct specified in paragraphs (1) through (26) have the potential to seriously affect the health, safety or welfare of student, staff, and other persons or to otherwise seriously interfere with the educational process.

Procedures

The principal or designee will conduct a reasonable investigation of the alleged Prohibited Conduct, examine the facts and circumstances, contact law enforcement as required by law, and cooperate with any law enforcement investigation.

The student will be given an opportunity to present his or her version of the situation. The principal or designee will determine the appropriate disciplinary action based upon the severity and extent of the Prohibited Conduct. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parents or guardian of the alleged behavior violation and the reasons for disciplinary action.

Short-Term Suspension

1. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. A short-term suspension shall be made only after a determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purposes.
2. Before such short-term suspension takes effect, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him or her, an explanation of the evidence the District has, and be given an opportunity to explain his or her version.
3. Within 24 hours, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the principal or administrator shall send a written statement to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parents or guardian before or at the time a student returns to school after a short-term suspension. At the time of the short-term suspension, the student and parent or guardian shall be provided with information regarding any opportunity to complete class work (including examinations) missed during the short-term suspension.

Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion and Mandatory Reassignment

Any long-term suspension, expulsion, and mandatory reassignment for Prohibited Conduct shall be subject to the procedural requirements set forth in the Student Discipline Act of the Nebraska statutes.

Length of Expulsion

1. Except as described in subparagraphs 2 and 3, expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect unless the misconduct occurred (a) within 10 school days prior to the end of the first semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect through the second semester, or (b) within 10 school days prior to the end of the second semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and the first semester of the following school year. Such action may be modified or terminated by the District at any time during the expulsion period.
2. The expulsion of a student for: 1) the knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person; or 2) the knowing and intentional possession, use, or transmission of a dangerous weapon, other than a firearm, shall be for a period not to exceed the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester. If the expulsion takes effect during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and may remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year. Such action may be modified or terminated by the School District at any time during the expulsion period.
3. A student found to have knowingly and intentionally possessed, used, or transmitted a firearm (as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921) on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity or athletic event, or in a vehicle being used for a school purpose shall be expelled from school for a period not less than one calendar year. The period of expulsion may be extended beyond one year to the beginning of the semester following the one-year period. The Superintendent is authorized to modify the expulsion requirement on an individual basis.
4. Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester of the following school year shall be automatically scheduled for review before the beginning of the school year. The review shall be conducted by the hearing officer who conducted the initial expulsion hearing, or a hearing officer appointed by the Superintendent in the event no hearing was previously held or the initial hearing officer is no longer available or willing to serve, after the hearing officer has given notice of the review to the student and the student's parent or guardian. This review shall be limited to newly discovered evidence or evidence of changes in the student's circumstances occurring since the original hearing. This review may lead to a recommendation by the hearing officer that the student be readmitted for the upcoming school year. If the Board of Education or a committee of such Board took the final action to expel the student, the student may be readmitted only by action of the Board. Otherwise, the student may be readmitted by action of the Superintendent.

School Activities

During any time period that a student is excluded from school due to short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion, or emergency exclusion, the student will be prohibited from being on school grounds (except the location designated for alternative education), from attending any extracurricular activities that take place on district property, and from participating in any school-sponsored activities, clubs and athletic programs.

Other disciplinary action may also be imposed in the form of additional restrictions (beyond the length of the suspension, expulsion or emergency exclusion) on the student's participation in school-sponsored activities, clubs and athletic programs, where such curtailment is necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process.

If such other disciplinary action is imposed (in the form of restrictions on the student's participation in school sponsored activities, clubs and/or athletic programs) beyond the time-period of the suspension, expulsion or exclusion, or is imposed in a situation where there has not been any accompanying suspension, expulsion or exclusion, the district shall follow the procedures as set forth in regulation to this policy.

C. School Transportation

The Code of Conduct requirements set forth in this policy apply equally to students when using any District-provided transportation.

Disciplinary action for behaviors that occur on District transportation includes, but is not limited to, temporary or permanent loss of riding privileges. During any period in which the transportation privilege is lost due to the misconduct of the student, transportation to and from school becomes the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee will conduct a reasonable investigation of the alleged Prohibited Conduct and shall make reasonable effort to notify the student's parents or guardian of the alleged behavior violation. The student will be given an opportunity to present his or her version of the situation. The Superintendent or designee will determine the appropriate disciplinary action based upon the severity and extent of the Prohibited Conduct and shall make reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian. Any short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion, and or mandatory reassignment from school for Prohibited Conduct shall be subject to the procedural requirements set forth in the Student Discipline Act of the Nebraska statutes.

II. OFF-SCHOOL GROUNDS/NOT AT SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITY OR SCHOOL VEHICLE

Prohibited Conduct described in Paragraphs (1) – (26) that occurs off school grounds and not at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event or in a vehicle being used for a school purpose constitutes grounds for short-term suspension and/or other disciplinary action where the conduct could reasonably be expected to reach the school or impact the school environment, or where there is such other connection to the school that permits disciplinary action to be taken. In addition, the Prohibited Conduct described in Paragraph 9 remains subject to the full range of penalties as discussed in Section I.

1. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. A short-term suspension shall be made only after a determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purposes.
2. Before such short-term suspension takes effect, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him or her, an explanation of the evidence the District has, and be given an opportunity to explain his or her version.
3. Within 24 hours, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the principal or administrator shall send a written statement to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, describing the student's conduct, misconduct, or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parents or guardian before or at the time a student returns to school after a short-term suspension. At the time of the short-term suspension, the student and parent or guardian shall be provided with information regarding any opportunity to complete class work (including examinations) missed during the short-term suspension.

III. ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FOR EXPELLED STUDENTS.

Expelled students will be offered an alternative school, class, or educational program. The Approved alternative educational programs may include but shall not be limited to: online-courses, community-based programs, home-based programs, District-based programs, specialized tutoring, and distance learning. The administration shall have the authority to approve other specific alternative programs and enter into contracts for the provision of such alternative programs.

Such programs will include an individualized learning program to enable the student to continue academic work for credit towards graduation during the term of their expulsion.

IV. EMERGENCY EXCLUSION

A. **Emergency Exclusion Up to Five Days.** The principal or designee may exclude a student from school for not more than five school days if:

1. The student has a dangerous communicable disease transmissible through normal school contacts and the student poses an imminent threat to the health and safety of the school community, or
2. The student's conduct presents a clear threat to the physical safety of the student or to others or is so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.

Before such emergency exclusion takes effect, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the reason for the exclusion, an explanation of the evidence supporting such exclusion, and be provided an opportunity to present his or her version. The principal or designee shall send a written statement to the student and the student's parents or guardians describing the reasons for the action taken. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parents before or at the time the student returns to school.

B. **Emergency Exclusion Beyond Five Days.** If the Superintendent or his or her designee determines that an emergency exclusion shall extend beyond the initial five school days, the following notice and hearing procedures shall be followed, and all procedures shall substantially comply with the provisions of sections 79-266 to 79-287 of the Student Discipline Act:

1. Written notice of the basis for the emergency exclusion beyond five days shall be given to the student and the student's parent/guardian by personal delivery or sent by registered or certified mail on or before the sixth day of the emergency exclusion, and shall include: a) A form on which the student or the student's parent/guardian may request a hearing, the date by which the hearing request must be received, and notice that, if such timely request is received, the requestor has a right to have that hearing held and a final determination made within ten school days after the first day of the emergency exclusion; b) Hearing procedures and appeal procedures; and c) Advisement of the right to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used and of the right to know the identity of witnesses and the substance of their testimony.
2. If a timely request for a hearing is made, the Superintendent or his or her designee shall appoint a hearing examiner, and the hearing examiner shall give oral or written notice to the principal, the student, and the student's parent/guardian of the time and place for the hearing. If the request of the student or the student's parent/guardian is received after the deadline date provided on the request for hearing form, the same basic procedure should be followed and the hearing should be an expedited one since the student is already out of school, but the hearing and determination need not be completed by the end of the tenth school day following the exclusion.

Rules Regarding Other Conduct.

In the event that individual coaches or sponsors of activities and/or clubs impose eligibility restrictions for student participation in school sponsored activities for behavior other than those listed above, those restrictions or rules shall be written and communicated to the participating students. Violation of the restrictions or rules shall result in discipline ranging from a reprimand to permanent removal from the school sponsored activities and/or clubs.

Students with Disabilities

Suspension, expulsion and/or emergency exclusion of verified or eligible disabled students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 shall comply with District procedures and state and federal law.

Additional Rules and Expectations

Student Dress Code

A student's personal appearance is the responsibility of the student and their family. Students in the Westside Community Schools are expected to dress in a way that is appropriate for the school setting. Students should not dress in a manner that is dangerous to the health and safety of anyone or interferes with the learning environment or teaching process in our school. Following is a list of examples of attire that will not be considered appropriate; this list is not all inclusive, and other forms of attire may be deemed by the Principal to be inappropriate for the school setting:

1. All students must wear a shirt, bottoms, (pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings) and shoes (soft-bottomed slippers are not allowed). Undergarments are not considered tops or bottoms. Clothing/undergarments should cover a student's private body parts. Clothing should not expose genitals or undergarments.
2. Costumes and blankets should not be worn during the school day unless they are a part of a school-sponsored activity.
3. Clothing and jewelry should not advertise beer, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
4. Clothing and jewelry should not be lewd, indecent, vulgar, make sexual references, exhibit nudity or profanity, or include violent images or language, hate speech, or images or language creating a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class.
5. Clothing and jewelry should not be able to be used as a weapon (ex: chains, spikes) or encourage horseplay or cause property damage (ex: cleats).
6. Clothing and jewelry should not promote illegal activity.
7. Heavy coats should be put away during the school day.
8. Unless it is part of a school-sponsored activity, students should not wear baseball caps, stocking caps, hoods. This does not prohibit religious headwear.

Consideration will be made for students who wear special clothing as required by religious beliefs, disability, or to convey a particularized message protected by law. The final decision regarding attire and grooming will be made by the Principal. In the event a student is uncertain as to whether a particular item or method of grooming is consistent with the school's guidelines, the student or student's parent/guardian should contact the Principal for pre-approval. If school staff determine that the student does not meet dress code, the student will be asked to change.

Coaches, sponsors, or teachers may have additional requirements for students who are in special lab classes, students who are participants in performing groups or students who are representing the school as part of an extracurricular activity program.

Violations of the dress code will expose the student to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

Bullying, Harassment, and Retaliation

Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Harassment includes the same behaviors, though not necessarily exercised from a standpoint of observed or perceived power.

Students who are victims of bullying or harassment, or who observe such conduct occurring, are to promptly report the matter to a teacher, counselor, or administrator so that the problem can be addressed. Retaliation against students who make reports of bullying activity is also prohibited. Students who engage in bullying, harassment, or retaliation are subject to the full range of penalties, including long-term suspension or expulsion.

Dating Violence

The goal of Westside Community Schools is to provide physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students. Dating violence involving students at school will not be tolerated.

“Dating violence” shall mean a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses, physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner. “Dating partner” shall mean any person, regardless of gender, involved in an intimate relationship with another person primarily characterized by the expectation of affectionate involvement whether casual, serious, or long term.

The District shall provide dating violence training to staff deemed appropriate by the administration. Dating violence training shall include, but not be limited to, basic awareness of dating violence, warning signs of dating violence, and this dating violence policy. Dating violence education shall be incorporated into the school program as is age-appropriate. Dating violence education shall include, but not be limited to, defining dating violence, recognizing dating violence warning signs, and identifying characteristics of healthy dating relationships.

Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection

Students are not to engage in inappropriate public displays of affection on school property or at school activities. Such conduct includes kissing, touching, fondling, or other displays of affection that are socially inappropriate. Such displays are subject to disciplinary action.

Nuisance Items

Students are not permitted to bring items that might reasonably have the potential to disrupt school operations, except when their presence serves an educational purpose approved by the Principal. The school is not responsible for items that are lost or broken. Pets are not allowed unless prearranged with the teacher and approved by the Principal.

Use of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

All electronic devices in classrooms are to be used for instructional purposes. This does not include devices authorized by a staff member for an educational assignment or by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan when used as set forth in the plan].

Students are permitted to use cell phones and other electronic devices before school hours, during passing periods, at lunchtime, and after school hours if used in conformity with these rules. The principal or other building leader may in addition prohibit student possession or use of cell phones and other electronic devices on school grounds during these times if he or she determines that such restriction is appropriate.

Use or possession of cell phones and other electronic devices, including the recording of any person, on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and in school vehicles is **prohibited** when the use or possession:

- disrupts or is reasonably likely to disrupt the educational environment;
- is an illegal activity under state, federal or local law/ordinance;
- is prohibited under any Board policy including, but not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct (Board Policy 5300) or District rules for internet use;
- is contrary to a directive previously given to a student by a staff member;
- creates a risk to the safety of students or others;
- infringes on a person's reasonable expectation of privacy; or
- constitutes “sexting.”

In addition to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct, cell phones and other electronic devices used in violation of these rules are subject to confiscation, and arrangements will be made to return the item to the student or a parent/guardian after school hours.

Definitions

“Cell phones and other electronic devices” include, without limitation, cell phones, cameras, computers, Mp3 players, portable gaming devices, two-way radios or any electronic or battery powered device that can transmit still images, video, or sound.

“Recording” includes capturing the image or voice of a person by photograph, audio recording, video or audio transmission, as well as transmitting, broadcasting, or streaming.

“Sexting” means generating, sending or receiving, encouraging others to send or receive, or showing others, through an electronic device, a text message, photograph, video or other medium that:

- displays sexual content, including erotic nudity or any sexually explicit conduct as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-1463.02; or
- displays a sexually explicit message for sexual gratification, flirtation or provocation, or to request or arrange a sexual encounter.

Classroom, IMC and Hall Conduct

- When the tardy bell rings, all students should be in a class, an IMC or the Courtyard.
- Student conduct in classrooms, hallways and IMC's should not disrupt others in the area.
- Students should exhibit respect for all persons, including staff, at all times.
- In hallways, students may wear only one earpiece if using headphones, earbuds, and similar devices.
- Student movement in the halls should be purposeful, both between and during mods.
- In all areas of the building, students should move quietly.
- Students must be out of the hallways immediately after the bell.
- Students are not permitted to be in unsupervised classrooms or other areas.
- The Courtyard is a student-talk area during non-lunch mods.
- Repeat offenses may result in assigned mods or other disciplinary action.

Assigned Mods

A student's independent study time (open mods/unscheduled study time) may be assigned by a teacher, counselor, or an administrator whenever (1) the student is failing, (2) the student is behind in completing assigned work, (3) the student has makeup work to do as a result of an absence, or (4) needed as a disciplinary consequence by the teacher or an administrator. Students who are assigned to regulated time are required to attend as if that regulated time were a class; failure to attend will result in further disciplinary action.

Academic Honesty

Westside High School strives to maintain a quality and fair learning environment. The following instances of academic dishonesty compromise this standard:

- Obtaining or accepting a copy of a test or test key.
- Copying, attempting to copy, or giving answers to another student during an examination.
- Failing to use only teacher approved materials during an examination.
- Failing to credit the product of someone else's creativity.
- Copying or permitting another student to copy or obtain credit for one's work, (including, but not limited to, homework, papers, project, laboratory report, take-home exam, or in class work) other than for a teacher approved collaborative effort.
- Any other action intended to obtain credit for work not one's own.

If a student is guilty of academic dishonesty, the consequences will be determined on an individual basis. Repeated infractions may result in disciplinary actions including suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment.

Outside Areas

During the school day all outside areas are off-limits, including parking lots. Students in unauthorized areas are subject to disciplinary action. No radios, listening devices, or other musical instruments may be used without headphones. Students with off-campus passes or who are on a blocked schedule are expected to leave the premises immediately.

Network, Email, and Other Computer Rules

District technology, including network and Internet access, is the property of the District, and is provided as a tool for students' educational use. Students should not assume that their use of District technology is private. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, the District will monitor computer usage and employ technology protection measures. The District may inspect, copy, review, transfer, and store, at any time and without prior notice, any and all usage of the district's computers, computer network, Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received (including e-mail). The superintendent or designee shall develop regulations, which may include descriptions of inappropriate uses in addition to those included in this policy.

Access to Technology

Use of the District's technology resources is a privilege and not a right. The Superintendent or designee shall develop appropriate user agreements and shall require that students and their parent/guardian to sign such user agreements as a condition of access to the technology resources. Parents and guardians shall inform the Superintendent or designee in writing if they do not want their child to have access.

The Superintendent and designees are authorized to establish such other regulations, forms, procedures, guidelines and standards to implement this Policy.

District technology resources are not a public forum. The District reserves the right to restrict any communications and to remove communications that have been posted.

Acceptable Uses

Technology resources are to be used for the limited purpose of advancing the District's mission, and are provided to students for educational purposes only.

Parents are provided a copy of the District's Acceptable Use Agreement at the start of each school year as part of the Back-to-School Update. A copy of the Acceptable Use Agreement is available on the District website.

Legal Reference: Children's Internet Protection Act - 47 U.S.C. 254

Cross-Reference: Policy 5300 (Code of Conduct)

Reporting Student Law Violations

School administrators will report to law enforcement student actions if the violation:

1. involves a firearm;
2. results in child abuse;
3. is a violation of state law such that the administration believes it would not adequately be addressed solely by discipline from the school district;
4. is a violation of state law that endangers the health and welfare of any student or staff member or that interferes with school purposes;
5. is one for which a report is required or requested by law enforcement or the county attorney.

Removal of Students by Law Enforcement

When a Principal or other school official releases a minor student to a peace officer (e.g., police officer, sheriff, and all other persons with similar authority to make arrests) for the purpose of removing the minor from school premises, the Principal or other school official will take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken. An exception applies when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse; in that event, the Principal or other school official shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parents or guardian.

In-School Suspension Rules

Students assigned to in-school suspension, or ISS, are expected to follow these rules:

- Be on time. Students arriving late may have to make up the missed time by staying later or serving time the following day.
- ISS starts at 8:15 a.m. and is dismissed at 3:10 p.m., except for Wednesdays, when it runs from 8:00 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.
- Students must bring work or something to read. Computer use will be supervised and the computer will be confiscated for off task behavior.
- There is no food or drink allowed, other than a school purchased lunch.
- Use of electronic devices of any kind are not allowed (phones, iPods, etc.). Devices used in violation of this rule are subject to immediate confiscation by the supervisor.
- Backpacks must be left by the supervisor's desk.

Students unable to complete the ISS consequence may be subject to additional consequences, including, but not limited to, being sent home.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Activities and Athletics

Westside strives to give students more than the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes experienced and learned in the classroom. An extensive program of school-sponsored activities and clubs has been made a part of the curriculum. The primary purposes of student activities and clubs are to enrich classroom work, to develop social skills and personality, to provide leisure time enjoyment, and to create outlets for the unusual talents and abilities possessed by students. Research has shown students that are involved with school activities/clubs do better in school.

School-Sponsored Activities and Clubs

Students may choose to participate in any of our school-sponsored student activities or clubs. Details about membership can be obtained from the sponsor, homeroom advisor or Mr. Wane. A school-sponsored "Club Fair Day" will be held during the first few weeks of school. School-sponsored activities and clubs include: African-American History, Band, BIONIC, Cheerleaders, Class Officers, Color Guard, Competitive Athletics, Cycling Club, Debate Team, DECA, Fashion Club, FBLA, French Club, Gay Straight Alliance, German Club, Interactive Gamers, International Thespian Society, Intramurals, Key Club, Louder than a Bomb Club, Math Club, Medical Club, Mock Trial, Mu AlphaTheta, National Art Honor Society, National Honor Society, Orchestra, Outdoor Education, Project Unify, Quiz Bowl, Red Shield, Robotics, Science Engineering & Technology Club, Service Learning Club, Skills USA, Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica, Speech Team, Step Team, Student Advisory Board (SAB), Student Mentoring Program, Varsity Dance, Vocal Music, Welcome to Westside, Westside Rugby Football Club.

Sports Physicals

Each student-athlete must have an Athletic Physical Exam and their Athletic Participation forms completed and signed by all necessary individuals prior to the beginning of athletic practices.

Student-athletes are responsible for getting their own physical exams. An opportunity to receive a sports physical from a consortium of doctors is typically available in late July or early August at Westside High School. There is a small fee for the exam. Doctors of both genders are available to do exams. Those interested should contact the high school athletics office for dates and times that exams will be offered. Student-athletes may always choose the option of receiving their exams from their own family physician. NOTE: Students who have their family physician perform the examination should still use the Westside Athletic Participation form.

Athletic physical forms, the athletic code of conduct and other parent consent forms are included in an athletic summer mailing each June. Extra forms are available in the main office.

Athletic Tickets

Athletic tickets are \$50 each and sold in the Business Office for all students.

All students who participate in any sport, cheerleading or varsity dance must purchase an athletic ticket prior to the start of their sport or season. All other students are encouraged to purchase an athletic ticket.

An athletic ticket will admit a student free to all WHS home athletic events except for district and state events. Purchasing your ticket at the start of the year will give you the maximum benefit. The student I.D. card is marked indicating the student has purchased an athletic ticket. Students on free or reduced lunch will receive an athletic ticket at no charge. The application process is outlined in [Board Policy #6340 Form](#).

Students should come to the main office to replace student I.D.'s and lost athletic passes.

Athletics and Activities Requirements

Students must be in attendance at least half of a school day in order to participate in extracurricular activities that day.

The NSAA requires students to pass 20 hours of credit from the immediate past semester to be eligible for varsity athletics/activities.

Fall Sports Candidates

The beginning of the fall sports season and the opening day of practice for football, softball, boys tennis and girls golf, volleyball, and cross country occurs in early-to-mid August. Nebraska School Activities Association rules prohibit participation on a non-high school team or in a non-high school tournament on or after this date. Check with the athletic director if you have any questions. Eligibility for high school competition could be affected.

Football coaches mailed pertinent information to prospective athletes the latter part of June. Incoming Freshmen and returning student athletes should have received an athletic mailing during June regarding our sports programs. If a student wants to try out for a fall sport and did not receive a mailing, contact the Athletic Department at 402-343-2602.

Athletic/Activity Code of Conduct

All students involved in Athletics or Activities/Clubs must have an Athletic/Activity code of conduct card signed and on file prior to their participation in a sport or activity. The Athletic/Activity Code of Conduct can be found on the high school's website which is located at whs.westside66.org. The appropriate participation forms can be found on that page by accessing the "Athletics" link and then selecting 'Participation Forms. Athletic/activity participants are required to sign a new Code of Conduct card each school year. However, parents and athletic/activity participants are reminded that their Code of Conduct signatures are good until the beginning of the following school year.

Student Fees Policy

Some school activities may require additional costs to students as a separate charge. No fees, specialized or non-specialized attire or equipment shall be required of students outside this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

"Extracurricular Activities" means student activities or organizations which are supervised or administered by the school district, which do not count toward graduation or advancement between grades, and in which participation is not required by the school district;

"Post-secondary education costs" means tuition and other fees associated with obtaining credit from a post-secondary educational institution.

The District may charge student fees or require students to provide specialized equipment or attire for:

1. Participation in extracurricular activities, including extracurricular music courses
2. Admission fees and transportation charges for spectators attending extracurricular activities
3. Post-secondary education costs, limited to tuition and fees associated with obtaining credits from a post-secondary institution
4. Transportation for option students and nonresident students (not qualifying for free lunches) as allowed by state statute
5. Copies of student files or records as allowed by state statute
6. Reimbursement to the district for property lost or damaged by the student
7. Before-and-after school or pre-kindergarten services in accordance with state statute
8. Summer school or night school
9. Breakfast and lunch programs
10. Parking

Musical Instruments

The District may also require students to furnish musical instruments for participation in optional music courses that are not extracurricular activities. The school will work with students eligible for fee waivers to furnish each with an instrument consistent with the student's interest, taking into consideration the cost and availability of instruments at the time.

Student Fees Handbook

The specific student fees that will be charged to students during the current school year, and items that students will be required to furnish, can be found in [Board Policy #6340](#). This policy is updated in the spring prior to the next school year; therefore, the fee(s) amount is subject to change.

Fee Waivers

Waivers for any of the following shall be provided for students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches:

1. Fees and specialized equipment and specialized attire required for participation in extracurricular activities;
2. Admission fees for on-site district-sponsored extracurricular activities and district transportation charges for spectators attending off site extracurricular activities; and
3. Materials required for course projects where the project becomes the property of the student upon completion of the course.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

Drug Free Schools

The Board of Education establishes the Westside Community Schools as drug-free schools as set forth in the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 2002.

Conduct Standards For Students. The standards of conduct that are applicable to students, and that clearly:

1. prohibit the unlawful possession, use, distribution or sale of illicit drugs, alcohol, and tobacco by students on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities
2. prohibit the possession or use of weapons, and
3. set forth the standards for maintaining an appropriate classroom environment, are contained in Board Policy 5300 - Student Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary sanctions, up to and including student expulsion and referral for prosecution, will be imposed as described in Board Policy 5300 on students who violate the Student Code of Conduct.

Education and Prevention

The District promotes comprehensive, age appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs. The curriculum includes the teaching of both proper and incorrect use of drugs and alcohol for all students in all grades. The District provides in-service orientation and training for staff with regard to drug and alcohol education and prevention programs.

Drug and Alcohol Use and Prevention

Each student of the District is hereby provided a copy of the standards of conduct for student behavior in the District which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities.

Program of the District Pursuant to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Laws and Regulations

All students are provided an age appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention program. The program educates on the adverse effects of the use of illicit drugs and alcohol, with the primary objective being the prevention of illicit drug and alcohol use by students.

Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Rehabilitation and Re-entry Programs

Information concerning available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs is available to all of the students upon request of the Counselor. In the event of disciplinary proceedings against a student for any District policy pertaining to the prohibition against the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, appropriate school personnel may confer with the student and the student's parents or guardian concerning available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs that appropriate school personnel consider to be of benefit.

Standards of Student Conduct Pertaining to Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

These standards are specified in Board Policy 5300 and elsewhere in this Handbook.

Intervention

The District does not have the authority or responsibility to make medical or health determinations regarding chemical dependency. However, when observed behavior indicates that a problem exists which may affect the student's ability to learn or function in the educational environment, the school has the right and responsibility to refer the student for a formal chemical dependency diagnosis based on behavior observed by school staff.

STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Harassment and Retaliation Are Prohibited

Westside Community Schools prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, marital, parental or pregnancy status, military status and any other basis protected by law in its programs and activities or in admission or access to, or treatment in, hiring and employment, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Retaliation for reporting discrimination or harassment or for participating in an investigation is also prohibited and will not be tolerated.

If you have concerns SHARE them with the building principal, a dean, counselor or any other building administrator or teacher or the Title IX Coordinator listed below. You may, but are not required to, fill out a Report of Concern Form, which is available on our website: westside66.org, in the main office or from the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX coordinator can also answer questions about our nondiscrimination policies and procedures. The designated Title Coordinator for students, parents, and others is

Director of Student Services
Westside Community Schools
909 S 76th ST
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 390-2100

Board Policy 5330 “Equal Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination” has information for students and parents about harassment and discrimination. For further information about anti-discrimination laws or to file a complaint of discrimination you may also contact

Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Dept. of Education
One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 268-0550, Fax (816) 268-0599, (TDD) (800) 877- 8339, or
ocr.kansascity@ed.gov.

Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The following is a description of the rights granted to qualifying students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning the decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education.
5. Have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to every student.
6. Have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources and by persons who know the student and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
7. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
8. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
9. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation and placement.
10. Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. (You and your child may take part in the hearing. Hearing requests are to be made to the Superintendent.)
11. File a local grievance.

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (also known as “FERPA”) is a federal law that protects the privacy of educational records (see Board Policy 5220 for more information).

The **2023-2024 Annual Notice of FERPA Rights** is published on the District’s website (westside66.org) in the Student Services section. A paper copy of the FERPA Notice may also be obtained from the Office of Student Services at 402-390-2100. The FERPA Notice contains information about Westside’s use and disclosure of a student’s educational records, access to records, information that may be disclosed without parental consent and how parents can opt-out of disclosure of information.

The following is a summary only of some of the information in the 2023-2024 Annual Notice:

Westside has designated these items of information that may be disclosed without consent (unless the parent or student age 18 or over has opted-out of such disclosure):

- Student name;
- Mailing address of first-listed parent and designated “home” telephone number in PowerSchool to military recruiters (11th and 12th grade only);
- Mailing address[es] of parents to the Westside Foundation for mailing purposes only (not for publication);
- Photograph and video/film of a student for inclusion in any school-sponsored publication or production, on the District’s social media sites and websites, or in response to a request by news media for a copy of a yearbook photo;
- Photograph and video/film of a student when permitted by the District to be taken by news media on school grounds during the school day;
- Dates student enrolled/dis-enrolled in the District, enrollment status and grade level;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Degrees, honors and awards received; and
- The most recent school/school district attended by the student prior to Westside Community Schools;

Such information may appear in school publications, yearbooks, playbills, the District’s website and social media, calendars, newsletters, and any other District publications, honor roll or other recognition lists, graduation programs, and sports and other activity sheets.

How to Opt-Out

Parents or students age 18 and over may opt-out of the District’s disclosure of any or all of the above items.

To obtain an Opt-Out Form contact the Welcome Center at 402-390-2100. Opt-Out Forms are due by September 15 of each year. Opt-Out Forms will be accepted after September 15; however, some information may have already been disseminated that cannot be changed or reversed.

Disclosure to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning

Westside is required by law to comply with requests by military recruiters and institutions of higher education for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of 11th and 12th grade students. Students or their parents may opt out of this disclosure by checking the appropriate box and signing the waiver provided to 11th & 12th grade students during the Back-to-School Update in August. For assistance, call 402-343-2603.

Notice Concerning Designation of Law Enforcement Unit

The District designates the Omaha Police Department as the District’s law enforcement unit for purposes of (1) enforcing any and all federal, state or local law, (2) maintaining the physical security and safety of the schools in the District, and (3) maintaining safe and drug free schools.

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The PPRA gives parents certain rights regarding surveys given to students and the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that asks questions about one or more of the following protected areas (protected information survey) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes

4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

Receive notice and opportunity to opt a student out of:

1. Any other protected information survey (see 8 areas listed above – regardless of funding).
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the District or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under Nebraska law.
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before distribution or use:

- a. Protected information surveys.
- b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.
- c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The District will notify parents of specific or approximate dates when such surveys are to be given. These rights transfer to the student at age 18 or upon emancipation under Nebraska law.

The District has adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights. See Board of Education Policies 2235 and 5220 and regulations thereto. These may be accessed on the District's website at westside66.org.

This Notification of Rights Under the PPRA will be provided directly to parents at least annually at the start of each school year (and after any substantive changes to any applicable Board Policies). It will also appear on the District's website. Questions or concerns about the PPRA may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment at 390-2127. Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Policy Regarding Students Experiencing Homelessness

Homeless children for purposes of this Policy generally include children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as further defined by applicable federal and state law.

No Stigmatization or Segregation of Homeless Students

It is the District's policy and practice to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated by the District on the basis of their status as homeless.

Enrollment of and Services to Homeless Children

A homeless child shall be enrolled in compliance with the law and be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the homeless child has been placed. Placement of a homeless child is determined based on the child's "school of origin" and the "best interests" of the child. The "school of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled. Placement decisions shall be made according to the District's determination of the child's best interests, and shall be at either: (1) the child's school of origin for the duration of the child's homelessness (or, if the child becomes permanently housed during the school year, for the remainder of that school year) or (2) the school of the attendance area where the child is actually living. It shall be presumed that keeping a homeless child or youth enrolled in his or her school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when such is contrary to the wishes of the homeless child's parent or legal guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth. To overcome the presumption that a child or youth should remain in his or her school of origin, the school shall consider student-centered facts including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of homeless children and youth, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth. If the placement is not in the school of origin or a school requested by the homeless child's parent or legal guardian, the District shall provide a written explanation of the placement decision and a statement of appeal rights to the parent or guardian as provided in Nebraska Rule 19.

If the homeless child is an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Coordinator shall assist in the placement decision, consider the views of the unaccompanied youth, and provide the unaccompanied youth with notice of the right to appeal. The process to resolve disputes concerning the enrollment or placement of a homeless child or youth is as follows:

1. The district shall provide a written response and explanation of a decision regarding any complaint or dispute of a parent, guardian or other person having legal or actual charge or control of a homeless child or youth within thirty (30) calendar days of the time such complaint or dispute is brought;
2. The enrollment of the homeless child or youth in the school where enrollment is sought during the time such dispute is being considered;
3. And notice of the right to appeal as provided in Nebraska Rule 19.

Any parent, guardian or other person having legal or actual charge or control of a homeless child or youth that is dissatisfied with the decision of a school district after the dispute resolution process may file an appeal with the Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the decision. Such appeals are informal and shall be submitted to the Commissioner in writing, as outlined in Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19, Section 005.03. The District shall immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless child to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the homeless child needs to obtain immunizations or medical records, the District shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the homeless child to the Homeless Coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records. The District may nonetheless require the parent or guardian of the homeless child to submit contact information.

Transportation will be provided to homeless students, to the extent required by law and comparable to that provided to students who are not homeless, upon request of the parent or guardian of the homeless child, or by the Homeless Coordinator in the case of an unaccompanied youth, as follows: (1) if the homeless child's school of origin is in the District, and the homeless child continues to live in the District, transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided by the District; and (2) if the homeless child lives in a school other than the District, but continues to attend the Westside Community Schools based on it being the school of origin, the new school and Westside Community Schools shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin and, if they are unable to agree, the responsibility and cost for transportation shall be shared equally.

Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The District has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction. The District provides the United States Department of Agriculture's required nondiscrimination statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The school food authority assures the State Department of Education that the school system will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals in all National School Lunch Programs. In fulfilling its responsibilities as the school food authority:

1. Agrees to serve meals free to children from families whose income meets eligibility guidelines.
2. Agrees to serve meals at a reduced price to children from families whose income falls between free meal scale and the poverty guidelines.
3. Agrees to provide these benefits to any child whose family's income falls within the criteria in Attachment A after deductions are made for the following special hardship conditions which could not reasonably be anticipated or controlled by the household: Unusually high medical expenses; shelter costs in excess of 30 percent of reported income; special education expenses due to the mental or physical condition of a child; disaster or casualty losses.
4. In addition, agrees to provide these benefits to children from families who are experiencing strikes, layoffs and unemployment which cause the family income to fall within the criteria set forth in federal guidelines.
5. Agrees there will be no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his inability to pay the full price of the meal. The names of the children eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens or tickets or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced-price meals shall not be required to: work for their meals; use a separate lunchroom; go through a separate serving line; enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance; eat meals at a different time; or eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price.
6. Agrees in the operation of child nutrition programs, no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, or national origin.
7. Agrees to establish and use a fair hearing procedure for parental appeals to the school's decisions on applications and for school officials' challenges to the correctness of information contained in an application or to be continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced-price meals. During the appeal and hearing the child will continue to receive free or reduced priced meals. A record of all such appeals and challenges and their dispositions shall be retained for three (3) years. Prior to initiating the hearing procedures, the parent or local school official may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent and school official to discuss the situation, present information, and obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing. The hearing procedure shall provide the following:
 - a. A publicly announced, simple method for making an oral or written request for a hearing.
 - b. An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person.
 - c. An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
 - d. Reasonable promptness and convenience in scheduling a hearing and adequate notice as to the time and place of the hearing.
 - e. An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a position without undue interference.
 - f. An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses.
 - g. The hearing be conducted, and the decision made by a hearing official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or in any previous conference.
 - h. The parties concerned, and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing official.
8. Agrees to designate the Director of Nutrition Services to review applications and make determinations of eligibility. This official will use the criteria outlined in this policy to determine which individual children are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
9. Agrees to develop and send to each child's parent or guardian a letter as outlined by State Department of Education including an application form for free or reduced-price meals at the beginning of each school year. Applications may be filed at any time during the year. All children from a family will receive the same benefits.

The following information is available in the office of the Director of Nutrition Services:

- Eligibility criteria for free and reduced meals
- Parent letter and application
- Public release
- Collection procedure

Nutrition Service Payment Options and Unpaid Meal Charges Procedures

Parents/guardians are responsible for meal payment to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.

Westside Community Schools provides multiple options for which a student and parent/guardian are able to pay for a student's meal or snack items. Through the district's designated app, accounts assigned to a student can have monies deposited into each account to be withdrawn from to pay for a student's meal and/or a la carte food/beverage item. The student's account can receive deposits over the internet, or at the school's POS/cash register via cash, cc, or check. Furthermore, schools have the ability to accept cash, cc, or check for lunch payment.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by setting up an account at the districts designated account management program or by speaking with the cafeteria manager.

Effect of Negative Balances

1. Full Pay Students

Full-pay students will pay for meals at the district's published standard rate each day. Students will be allowed to charge into a negative balance with no notice or communication to the child. If a student's account is charged into the negative and the negative balance is not corrected, the building principal or designee will contact the parent(s) or guardian to notify them of the deficit account, establish a repayment method regarding this account, and (re)introduce the application for free or reduced meals. The student will be allowed to continue to receive the chosen meal from the menu, and the District will not impose an alternative meal requirement for students with unpaid meal debt. This is done to maintain the dignity of the student as well as to avoid possible negative perceptions toward the student and in recognition that it is the responsibility of parents, not the student, to maintain positive account balances. When accounts are in the negative, only a qualified meal will be allowed, and students will not be allowed to charge for additional "extra" items such as a second entrées and a la carte items.

2. Free Meal Benefit Students

All qualified free meal status students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A student must have an account in the positive to purchase any a la carte items or must pay for these items with cash. A free student will not be allowed to charge into the negative for a la carte or extra items.

3. Reduced Meal Benefit Students

All reduced meal cost status students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch each day at the standard reduced meal price of the district. The student will be allowed to continue to receive the chosen meal from the menu, and the District will not impose an alternative meal requirement for students with unpaid meal debt. This is done to maintain the dignity of the student as well as to avoid possible negative perceptions toward the student and in recognition that it is the responsibility of parents, not the student, to maintain positive account balances.

When accounts are negative, only the qualified meal will be allowed, and students will not be allowed to charge for additional "extra" items such as second entrees and a la carte items. If a student has money in hand to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of meal service, the student must be provided a meal. The District may not use the student's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

The District shall not permit the assistance of unauthorized persons, such as parent or guardian volunteers, to assist with notification to parents of meal account status or collection efforts.

Carry-Over of Funds

Any balance in a continuing student's account will be carried over to the next school year.

Refunds for Students Who Withdraw or Graduate

Parents will be contacted by the District to direct how they wish their remaining funds be disbursed, such as return payment to them or transfer to a sibling's account. Parents of full-pay students may also choose the option of donating their remaining funds to an unpaid meal balance fund (used to offset uncollectable meal charges). Parents must direct, in writing (including via e-mail) how they want the remaining funds disbursed.

Notice Concerning Staff Qualifications

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) gives parents the right to acquire information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Upon request, Westside Community Schools will give parents the following information about their child's classroom teacher:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher. You may also get information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

We will also, upon request, tell parents whether their child is being provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, the qualifications of the paraprofessional. The request for information should be made to an administrator in your child's school building. The information will be provided to you in a timely manner.

Finally, Westside Community Schools will give timely notice to you if your child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the Act.

APPENDIX A: PBIS Behavior Matrix

	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on the right Move to the side when talking or texting Report concerning behavior/suspicious people to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Greet others and use manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Move with a purpose
Activity Gym Room 271 Room 222 (during lunch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Use technology appropriately
Courtyard (lunch mods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep walkways clear Dispose of items appropriately Remain seated for the last 10 minutes of the mod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Put computers away
Courtyard (non-lunch mods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain seated for the last 10 minutes of the mod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Use technology appropriately Use open mods responsibly
Foyer/Entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the entrance a welcoming place Follow the check in/check out procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Use technology appropriately
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash your hands Report any blood or other spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Use for intended purposes Notify an adult of any concerns Flush
Landing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on the right Move with a purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction Maintain appropriate personal space Respect personal property Move with a purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard Move with a purpose
Extracurricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in designated area(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone Follow teacher instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep facilities clean Represent your school with Warrior pride!
IMCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep walkways clear Find a seat quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep area clean Keep food and drink in the courtyard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow seating limits • Remain seated for the last 10 minutes of the mod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow teacher instruction • Maintain appropriate personal space • Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology appropriately • Sign in if assigned • Use open mods responsibly
Locker Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure your valuables in your locker • Change clothes quickly • Move to designated area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use school appropriate language, volume, and tone • Follow teacher instruction • Maintain appropriate personal space • Respect personal property • Respect the privacy of others • Follow 10-minute rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep area clean • Keep food and drink in the courtyard

APPENDIX B: Physical Education Opt-Out Guidelines

Sophomore students are allowed to opt out of part or all of selected P.E. classes (see list below.) There are two options.

Option One

A student may opt out of part of a P.E. course and earn full course credit if all of the following requirements are met.

1. The student is enrolled in one of the following P.E. classes: Cross Training, Sports Skills 1, Swimming 1, 2, or 3, Strength & Conditioning 1 or 2. Note: Students who opt out of Sports Skills 1 or Strength & Conditioning 1, cannot take Sports Skills 2 or Strength & Conditioning 2.
2. The student successfully completes one season (fall, winter, or spring) as a member of one of Westside High School's NSAA sanctioned sports teams. Club sports teams cannot be considered. Students who are opting out must attend EVERY practice and competition scheduled. Students who only attend 2 or 3 practices a week will not be allowed to opt out.
3. The student opts out of the selected P.E. class only during the official days that the sport is "in season." Seasons begin according to published NSAA and Westside guidelines. Coaches will inform team members when the season ends. Preseason conditioning is not part of the sports season. If a team has tryouts, the student must wait until they have successfully completed tryouts before opting out.
4. During their opting out period, students still attend classes but do not participate. They can use the class time as a time to work on assignments or work with other teachers.
5. When a student's team has completed their competitive season, the student must attend his/her regularly scheduled P.E. class (see classes listed above) and earn a passing grade. The student must begin attending the scheduled class on the first day it meets following the end of the sport's season. The Westside Athletic Department will notify P.E. teachers regarding the beginning and end of each team's season.

NOTE: Any of the following will result in loss of credit:

- Failure to complete the team's season
- Dismissal from the team
- Failure to attend P.E. classes when the sport is "out of season."
- Failure to earn a passing grade in P.E.

In any of these cases, a student will be required to complete a semester of P.E. in summer school or during a following semester.

Option Two

A student may opt out of an entire semester of Physical Education. Student will have one semester of Westside High School's Physical Education graduation requirement waived but will NOT earn credit in Physical Education towards graduation. Following are the conditions a student must meet for this option:

1. The student must successfully complete two consecutive seasons (fall-winter or winter-spring) as a member of two of Westside High School's NSAA sanctioned sports teams.
2. A student who fails to complete a team's season, who is dismissed from the team, or who changes his/her mind and quits the team will not receive a waiver or any graduation credit. In these cases, the student will be required to make up a full semester of P.E.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Whether choosing either option, it is important that students and parents understand that opting out is a semester-long obligation. Students must complete the entire semester's requirements (successful team participation and P.E. class requirements) to earn P.E. credits or a waiver from P.E. Injured students who are unable to continue with their sport must return to their respective Physical Education class immediately in order for credit to be allowed. If they cannot finish their sport season due to injury and do not return to class, no opt out credit will be granted. Students must maintain sports participation eligibility including acceptable academic progress and appropriate sportsmanlike behavior. Failure to do so will result in no credits earned and no waiver. Partial credit will not be granted.

Please contact a physical education teacher with any questions regarding these guidelines.