**Walnut Street School**

**International Baccalaureate**

**Primary Years Program**

**World School**



**Parent Handbook**

**2014-2015**

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[](http://walnutstreet.dmschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Kindergarten-Pic.jpg)

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year at Walnut Street School (WSS)!

WSS is an International Baccalaureate – Primary Years Programme World School. We are dedicated to providing your children a safe and nurturing environment that supports and challenges their development. Children in the elementary years are developing the necessary skills, both social and academic, to become confident and engaged students. Our school encourages children to be active, lifelong learners. Skilled, professional teachers and staff at WSS involve children in the learning process through fostering an environment of inquiry, focusing on challenging questions, through creative problem solving activities, and by engaging critical thinking skills.

Students at WSS are immersed in a rich curriculum that includes literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. Absolutely integral to our school programming are experiences in art, music, health and fitness, technology, library, world cultures, and Mandarin Chinese language. Children work collaboratively in a diverse, multicultural environment where possibilities are unlimited. A thorough education provided in a warm and encouraging setting prepares our students to move forward confidently as learners and global citizens.

Our community of students, parents and staff at Walnut Street School welcomes you!

Robert K. Burnett

Robert K. Burnett, Principal

Walnut Street School

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**WSS Vision:**

“Walnut Street School…

A Place to Learn, A Place to Thrive, A Place to Love.”

**WSS Mission:**

*Walnut Street School provides a strong social, emotional,*

*and academic foundation for students to excel as*

*lifelong learners in a global community through*

*intercultural understanding and respect.*

**WSS Beliefs:**

WSS is a community in which:

* The IB Learner Profile is the core of our teaching and learning practice.
* Mutual respect and communication are essential to the educational process.
* Our diverse multi-cultural community is essential to our identity.
* All individuals are unique and valued.
* All individuals are nurtured to achieve their full potential.
* Self-esteem is developed in a safe and caring environment.
* All individuals reflect on and inquire into their roles and responsibilities as global citizens.
* We strive for academic excellence for all students.

**WSS School Song**

***The Happiest Street in the World***

If you feel lonely and you need a friend,

I know a place on which you can depend.

A place that’s quiet and always nearby,

So let’s go there.

You’re on the happiest street in the world (Walnut Street)

The happiest street in a beautiful world.

A place to be young, a place to be free, for you and for me.

Yes, it’s the happiest street in the world.

The happiest street in a wonderful world.

Wherever I ever go, the happiest street I know.

Sometimes you worry, you doubt and you fear,

But when you’re with us those thoughts disappear.

We’ll be together and friendship and hope’s all you see here.

You’re on the happiest street in the world (Walnut Street).

The happiest street in a beautiful world.

A place to be young, a place to be free, for you and for me.

Yes, it’s the happiest street in the world.

The happiest street in a wonderful world.

Wherever I ever go, the happiest street I know.

The happiest street in the world!

**WSS World Pledge**

I pledge allegiance to the world,

to care for earth, sea, and air,

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=globe&start=140&um=1&sa=N&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&hl=en&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=uM6ff2QcQEgC5M:&imgrefurl=http://www.pokerq4.com/the-inevitability-of-the-poker-white-dwarfs&docid=lTGrHs7vbzSe9M&imgurl=http://www.pokerq4.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/flags_globe.179100354.jpg&w=1732&h=1732&ei=FljlUencNIO9ywGHoIC4Cw&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:58,s:100,i:178&iact=rc&page=7&tbnh=195&tbnw=195&ndsp=25&tx=93&ty=110)to cherish every living thing,

with peace and justice everywhere!

**International Baccalaureate (IB) Mission:**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

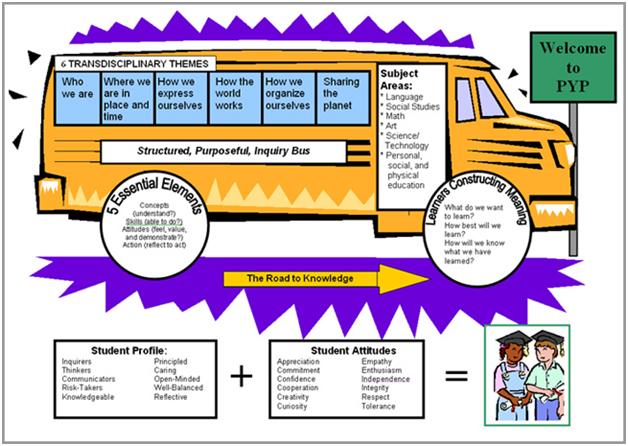
**The IB Learner Profile:**

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally-minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INQUIRERS** | They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives. |
| **KNOWLEDGEABLE** | They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines. |
| **THINKERS** | They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions. |
| **COMMUNICATORS** | They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others. |
| **PRINCIPLED** | They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them. |
| **OPEN-MINDED** | They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience. |
| **CARING** | They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. |
| **RISK-TAKERS** | They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs. |
| **BALANCED** | They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others. |
| **REFLECTIVE** | They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development. |

**The Primary Years Programme (PYP)**

The PYP is the elementary portion of the IB continuum. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. It is a framework guided by six trans-disciplinary themes of global significance, explored using knowledge and skills derived from six subject areas, as well as trans-disciplinary skills, with a powerful emphasis on inquiry.

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=the+pyp+curriculum+framework&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&docid=UIfyZhzCQSb-BM&tbnid=YczooSSR_GdQmM:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://www.austinbilingualschool.com/elementary-school/programs&ei=LXbUUea-IYTA8ASVlIDgDA&bvm=bv.48705608,d.dmg&psig=AFQjCNE9QDwVf9tReLq6TImq1-fXnDvBpA&ust=1372964775673953)**How is learning organized in the PYP framework?**

At the heart of the PYP philosophy is a commitment to structured, purposeful inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning.

The PYP is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning with an international curriculum model that provides guidelines for what students should learn, a teaching methodology and assessment practices.

Through the PYP, your child will:

* Engage in structured, purposeful inquiry actively being involved in their own learning.
* Develop a deep understanding of important concepts through the inquiry approach.
* Conduct research into areas which have local and global significance.
* Acquire and practice a range of trans-disciplinary skills.
* Be encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward learning, the environment and other people through the learner profile and attitudes.
* Have the opportunity for involvement in responsible action and social service.

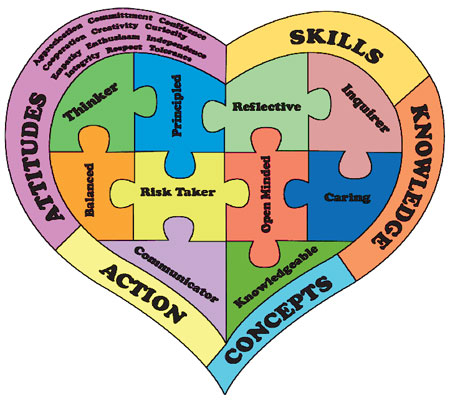
**The Program of Inquiry (POI)**

The PYP curriculum is centered on six “Units of Inquiry” at each grade level (four in Preschool). In order to offer a balanced program at each grade level, the PYP has identified six trans-disciplinary themes representing significant knowledge areas which all have global relevance. All grade levels study one unit from each of the trans-disciplinary themes.

The six trans-disciplinary themes are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Who We Are** | An inquiry into the nature of self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human. |
| **Where We Are in Place and Time** | An inquiry into the orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations from local and global perspectives. |
| **How We Express Ourselves** | An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs, and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic. |
| **How the World Works** | An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment. |
| **How We Organize Ourselves** | An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment. |
| **Sharing the Planet** | An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution. |

**The Exhibition**

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=IB+PYp&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&docid=aqt-5A0v73r3GM&tbnid=qY3F77F7vjRiLM:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://www.monticelloschools.net/Chase/internationalbaccalaureate.cfm&ei=YoPUUcr8KYX49QTvooDADA&bvm=bv.48705608,d.dmg&psig=AFQjCNF5FH-6WPTRwhuv7j62hO1irMywZQ&ust=1372968160512794)The Exhibition is an important part of the PYP for all students. In fifth grade, students undertake a collaborative, trans-disciplinary inquiry process that involves them in identifying, investigating and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems. As the culminating experience of the PYP, the Exhibition offers students an exciting opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning.

**Literacy and Language Learning**

Language is fundamental to PYP learning and is at the core of our entire curriculum.

At WSS, students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language in an environment where they are actively engage in asking questions and solving problems, making meaning, thinking reflectively and building enduring understandings.

WSS recognizes that the acquisition and control of language contributes genuine empowerment for individuals in society, and in order to adequately equip students for success in their lives, it is crucial that they develop proficiency and expertise in speaking, listening, reading and writing in a wide range of mode and registers.

We believe every teacher at Walnut Street School (WSS) is a teacher of language. We further believe every student is a language learner, regardless of what languages they speak. Each student has his or her own background and unique contributions to make to the WSS community. These are crucial for defining their cognitive development, in maintaining their native language, and their cultural identity.

Through language development, students are given the tools they need to interpret the world around them. Language development is an on-going process with emphasis on:

* **Listening** as a means of communicating effectively
* **Speaking** as a way of transferring language from school to home
* **Reading** to develop understanding and knowledge of the world
* **Writing** to communicate different ideas, opinions, and perspectives
* **Viewing** to create a purposeful learning environment
* **Presenting** as an expression of knowledge acquired

We believe in the acquisition of more than one language as a means to enrich personal growth and develop a greater capacity as global citizens. Students learn to use language to successfully interact with people of all cultures and increase their acceptance of diversity.

**LANGUAGE BELIEFS:**

* Language skills are acquired most effectively from using language in meaningful contexts and from experiencing a variety of literature.
* Language is seen as a trans-disciplinary element throughout our curriculum.
* Teachers model language usage and attitudes toward language and literature.
* Language acquisition is supported by a language-rich environment.
* Language is learned in an environment where risk-taking is encouraged and mistakes are considered inevitable and necessary.
* Talk in the classroom is fundamental to learning. Discussions, rehearsed talk and social talk all play a role in language acquisition.

**LANGUAGE PRACTICES:**

The primary language of instruction at WSS is English. In all classrooms at WSS, reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing skills are necessary tools for effective communication. The mastery of these skills is essential for enrichment and lifelong learning. Students need multiple opportunities to build essential skills in the classroom. The essential skills and components of our language-based instruction include but are not limited to the following:

* **Listening:** read-alouds, discussions, songs, listening center
* **Speaking:** choral reading, shared reading, Morning Meeting, partner work, discussions, songs
* **Reading:** guided reading, leveled readers, literature circles, read-alouds, shared reading, independent reading, literacy stations
* **Writing:** daily journal, writers’ workshop, graphic organizers, reports, reflections on learning, student-created books
* **Viewing:** focus walls, environmental print, morning message, media
* **Presenting:** author’s chair, role play, oral presentations, student-led conferences

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=china&safe=active&sa=X&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=MYUcWwQKoP6IKM:&imgrefurl=http://www.harbus.org/2011/social-network-in-china/&docid=xTvNyn7MGstt9M&imgurl=http://www.harbus.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/china-managed-services.jpeg&w=1211&h=766&ei=yofUUfSmN7Xd4AOIsoHgCg&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:28,s:0,i:173&iact=rc&page=2&tbnh=178&tbnw=282&start=15&ndsp=20&tx=163&ty=90)**MANDARIN CHINESE:**

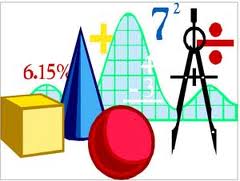
* All students will receive instruction in the world language of Mandarin Chinese.
* Students are assessed on their progress and held accountable for the Mandarin Chinese language learning as an academic subject.
* Mandarin Chinese instruction is differentiated for the many levels of proficiency in each grade and tied to the school wide program of inquiry.
* Mandarin Chinese is reported on progress reports and families have the opportunity to have discussions with the instructor during conferences or scheduled times between parents and instructor.

**Mathematics Learning**

Mathematics in the PYP is primarily viewed as a vehicle to support inquiry, providing a global language through which we make sense of the world around us. Mathematics is taught in relevant, realistic contexts. In this way, students begin to use mathematics as a way of thinking, rather than seeing it as a series of facts and equations to be memorized.

Our goal is to develop students who are fluent in the language of mathematics and can apply their knowledge and understanding to real world situations.

Individual grade level mathematics curriculum standards are available. Please visit with your child’s teacher for this information.

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=mathematics&start=233&safe=active&sa=X&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=4QG2EhSsSPAKTM:&imgrefurl=http://medicineworld.org/news/news-archives/health-news/Dec-16-2005.html&docid=Dv5HSqt9Or7ZdM&imgurl=http://medicineworld.org/images/news-blogs/mathematics-784673.jpg&w=300&h=227&ei=B8bdUZOOHKemygGJvoG4BQ&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:48,s:200,i:148&iact=rc&page=11&tbnh=181&tbnw=231&ndsp=23&tx=121&ty=88)

**Other Academic Programs**

**VISUAL ARTS**

The impulse to make art is common to all people. From earliest times, human beings have displayed a fundamental need to create, and to communicate personal and cultural meaning through art.

Visual arts continually open up new possibilities and challenge traditional boundaries. This is evident both in the way we make art and in the way we understand what artists from around the world do. Theory and practice in visual arts are dynamic and ever-changing, and connect many areas of study and human experience through individual and collaborative production and interpretation.

The WSS visual arts program runs concurrently and in collaboration with many of the IB-PYP units of inquiry, but may also take its own path. Students engage all Learner Profile skills across the year in diverse art-based activities. There are opportunities to try different materials and apply them in different ways, ranging from abstract, expressionistic and experimental methods, to traditional drawing, painting and model-making skills. Students aim to develop a range of skills through observing demonstrations, experimentation, practice and being introduced to different art forms and approaches. Students are encouraged to develop confidence in applying verbal, physical and visual communication skills. They explore and express ideas as well as debate and analyze concepts through group and individual work.

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=visual+arts&safe=active&sa=X&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=gur_P1R18pzaPM:&imgrefurl=http://www.careerqa.com/careers/visual-arts/&docid=Jt1YhQsEH1lrBM&imgurl=http://www.careerqa.com/images/visual-arts.jpg&w=426&h=282&ei=TcbdUe7XHOTRyQHk8oCYDg&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:30,s:0,i:179&iact=rc&page=2&tbnh=183&tbnw=275&start=20&ndsp=23&tx=107&ty=122)

**MUSIC**

PYP believes learning about and through arts is fundamental to the development of the whole child, promoting creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills and social interaction. The arts develop innovative thinking and creative use of technologies, and in so doing prepare students to participate fully in this multifaceted world.

Music is an essential part of the PYP. The music curriculum in the PYP consists of six strands:

* Performing (singing)
* Performing (playing instruments)
* Creating and composing
* Notation
* Listening and appreciation
* Music in society

Throughout the music program, students will have exposure to different types of instruments, to sing and compose music and to explore their creative self through musical activities. An emphasis is placed on learning music from diverse cultures and time periods. Music is sometimes linked with the PYP units of inquiry, but where a natural link does not present itself, it is taught as a stand-alone unit.

All grade levels take part in a musical performance once a year, as well as performing for in-class presentations, assemblies, and Exhibition. Performing in this way helps the children build confidence and further develop cooperation skills.

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=music&safe=active&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=xniARvof-IhFqM:&imgrefurl=http://america2013.voices.wooster.edu/music-is-the-key-to-the-scene/&docid=ZRlXguvC6VsxAM&imgurl=http://america2013.voices.wooster.edu/files/2013/04/il_fullxfull.224312765.jpg&w=1500&h=1023&ei=wcbdUc_9K8qWywGL24AQ&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:26,s:0,i:165&iact=rc&page=2&tbnh=184&tbnw=271&start=15&ndsp=20&tx=159&ty=104)

**PERSONAL, SOCIAL, PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PSPE)**

Personal, Social and Physical Education (PSPE) is concerned with the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills related to personal, social and physical well-being in order to make healthy lifestyle choices. The IB Learner Profile is integral to teaching and learning PSPE in the PYP because it represents the qualities of effective learners and internationally-minded students.

PSPE offers children the opportunity to explore the capabilities of their bodies and the variety of ways in which they are able to use their bodies to solve simple problems, tackle appropriate physical challenges, manipulate equipment or apparatus, and express themselves in a range of situations. Children will be exposed to a number of activities that will develop gross motor skills that may later be applied in various sports. Children will become aware of safe behavior practices when engaging in physical activities; recognize the importance of fair play, cooperative behaviors; and the ability to function as part of a group. Children will be introduced to some of the ways exercise affects their bodies.

Students should wear tennis shoes on the days their class is scheduled for PSPE.

Also, students are expected to participate in PSPE when their class is scheduled. In instances when a child may have an injury or other short-term condition which may cause concern for the child or parents to participate in PSPE, parents must submit written documentation from the child’s physician to the school nurse in order to have the child excused from PSPE them for a period of time.

All students participate in our annual Olympics Day which is an opportunity to celebrate our PSPE learning and successes while strengthening the relationships between all stakeholders within our school community. Our annual Olympics Day is typically held in mid to late May.

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=PE&safe=active&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=FJGODWFnY_eZDM:&imgrefurl=http://www.mpsaz.org/whittier/grade/pe/&docid=nCYUuJE7myGDhM&imgurl=http://www.mpsaz.org/whittier/grade/pe/images/pe.jpg&w=512&h=384&ei=VsjdUZySBaq5yAGd-oCIAg&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:12,s:0,i:115&iact=rc&page=1&tbnh=158&tbnw=211&start=0&ndsp=17&tx=94&ty=70)

**Assessment**

Assessment is a continuous process that allows teachers, parents and students to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement, as well as the effectiveness of the program. It is a daily activity at WSS and takes on various forms.

There are two main categories of assessment. *Formative Assessment* is interwoven with daily teaching and learning and helps teachers and students find out what children already know, understand and can do in order to plan for further student learning and growth. Formative assessment occurs throughout a learning unit or process. *Summative Assessment* takes place at the end of a learning unit or process. It is a chance for students, teachers and parents to evaluate progress and demonstrates what has been learned over the course of time. It is a formal ending point to a taught unit or of a process, but not necessarily the end of student learning in the areas being assessed.

At WSS, we use a range of assessment tools and strategies, which include: observations, performance assessments, quizzes and tests and open-ended tasks. Students are evaluated on assessment tools such as: rubrics (student and/or teacher designed criteria), benchmarks, checklists, and continuums that show progression of achievement.

**PORTFOLIO**

A portfolio (collection of student artifacts and reflections) is kept by each student to share with parents and to demonstrate how students are progressing during the year. Student portfolios stay at school and move from grade to grade with the student. This record is valuable in assessing student growth over time.

**Portfolio Contents:**

* Students will select at least one item to demonstrate their learning in each unit of inquiry accompanied with a student reflection
* PYP Learner Profile Reflection
* Unit of Inquiry Reflection
* Evidence of learning from Art, Music, Personal, Physical, and Social Education (P.S.P.E) , and Mandarin Chinese in each Unit of Inquiry as they apply
* Students will select at least one item to demonstrate their learning in the areas of reading, writing and math at least every six weeks

**Management Guidelines:**

* Students will have a portfolio for grades preschool through 5th grade.
* Portfolios are intended to be student managed with teacher guidance.

**CONFERENCES**

At WSS, we believe the opportunity to conference both formally and informally is supportive of open lines of communication amongst all stake holders. Conferencing allows students, teachers, and families to discuss student progress in a structured forum and provides the occasion for all parties to be involved in goal setting. It is the position of WSS that formal district scheduled conferences (October and February) will be formatted as three-way student-led conferences. The conference description below is provided by IBO in the document Making the PYP Happen: A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education.

*Three-way conferences involve the student, parents and teacher. Students discuss their learning and understanding with their parents and teacher, who are responsible for supporting the student through this process. Students are responsible for reflecting upon work samples they have chosen to share, that have been previously selected with guidance and support from the teacher and could be from the student’s portfolio. The student, parents and the teacher collaborate to establish and identify the student’s strengths and areas for improvement. This may lead to the setting of new goals, with all determining how they can support the achievement of the goals. The teacher is an integral part of the process and takes notes of the discussion. All of the participants must understand the format and*

*their roles prior to the conference.*

Our primary goal during these conferences is to support students in becoming reflective, open minded, caring, communicators who demonstrate confidence, commitment, respect and appreciation for their learning through the presentation of learned content and the setting of goals. We strongly value the precept that parents and families are powerful teachers in student’s lives and that through the modeling of the behaviors listed above all stake holders support students deep understanding of these characteristics. As such, each student will have one conference time\* for his or her family. This is an opportunity for caring parties from a student’s home and school life to collaboratively support him or her in communicating his or her knowledge and in setting goals for future learning. We value your participation in and commitment to the conferencing process at WSS to support student learning.

*\*unless school is provided with legal documentation prohibiting contact between adults involved in the conference*

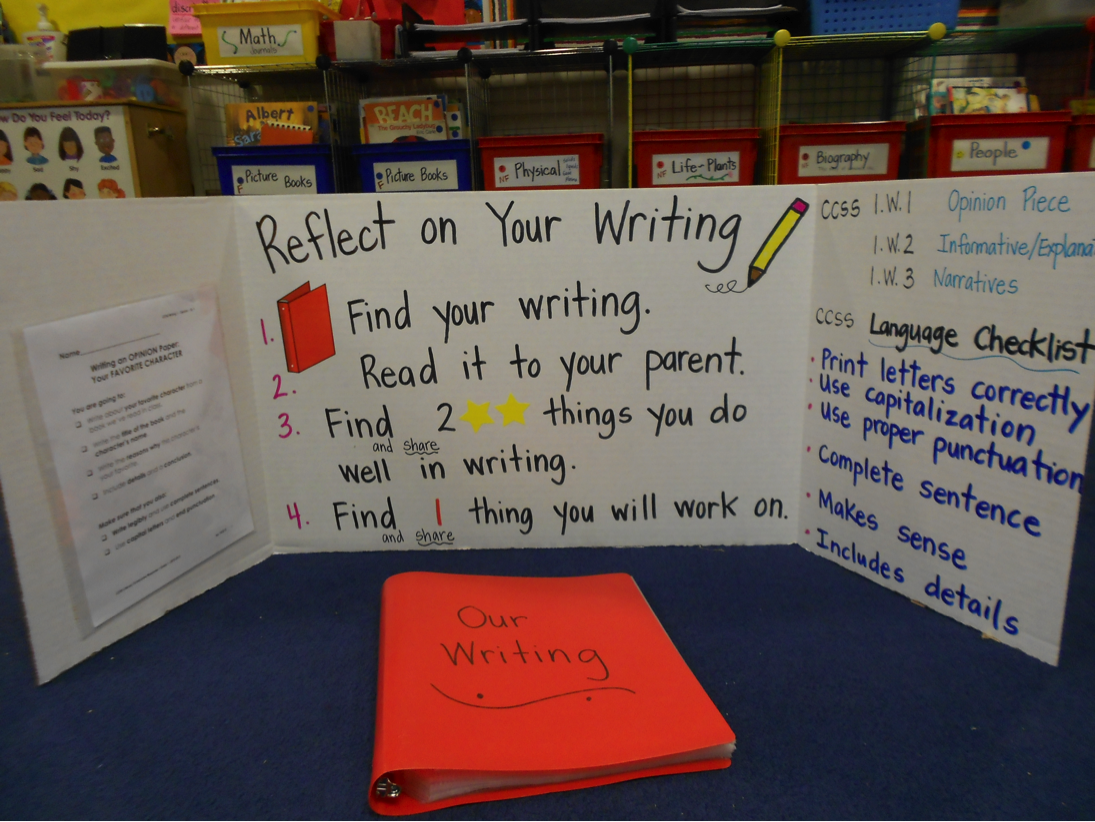
Parents may always feel free to schedule additional conferences or meetings with their child’s teacher at other times during the year. Parents should work directly with their child’s teacher to schedule these meetings.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

Students will receive a written Progress Report three times a year. These will provide students and parents with information related to academic progress.

**IB-PYP EXHIBITION**

At the end of Grade 5, all students participate in the IB-PYP Exhibition. It is a significant event in the life of a PYP school and its students. The IB-PYP Exhibition is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the IB Learner Profile that they have been developing throughout their engagement with the PYP. It is also a time to celebrate the transition from elementary to middle school (PYP to MYP). The IB-PYP Exhibition is an 8-10 week in-depth collaborative inquiry. Working in groups, the students investigate a real-issue that is pertinent to them with the purpose of creating an action plan to make a difference. Teachers and community mentors support the students through each phase of the research project. The IB-PYP Exhibition is shared with members of the wider community at the end of the process.

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=student-led+conference&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&docid=ohguE6SIXZd0FM&tbnid=uvgTHGQhDRbB0M:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2013/03/20/student-led-conferences/&ei=HXDgUdbTJ8e3rgG5wYCwAg&psig=AFQjCNE6l3JvScdNZYpAVROyelhBM37HcA&ust=1373749552949651)

**General Procedures and Information A-Z**

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=student+art&safe=active&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&biw=1366&bih=673&tbm=isch&tbnid=sz6wZL3jSyD0mM:&imgrefurl=http://mnprairieroots.com/tag/student-art-exhibit/&docid=s3FQdyiRLBfmgM&imgurl=https://mnprairieroots.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/art-hearts.jpg&w=1752&h=1168&ei=OHHgUfSxD6acyQHVpYDoCg&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:18,s:0,i:133&iact=rc&page=2&tbnh=183&tbnw=275&start=18&ndsp=24&tx=170&ty=126)

**ATTENDANCE**

It is important for students to attend school each day. They are also expected to be at school on time. Students need to be at school by 8:10 each morning.

There are times when children should not be in school because of illness, injury, or other reasons. It is the parent’s responsibility to contact the school office at 242-8438 by 8:00 a.m. if a child will not be in school.

If your child needs to be excused from school for a doctor, dentist, or therapist appointment, please let the office know in the morning. You will need to stop by the office to sign your child out when they leave for an appointment. We will get your child from class when you arrive. We do not have students wait in the office to be picked up for appointments. You will need to sign your child back in when they return from their appointment. Also, you will need to bring a written note from your physician, dentist or therapist to serve as documentation for the school office.

If a pattern of absences or tardies arise for a student, the school social worker will contact the family to discuss the issue. Additionally, significant absences and/or tardies can result in a child losing their open enrollment status at WSS.

**ACTION AS SERVICE**

Action as Service projects form an essential component of the IB-PYP curriculum by helping to develop students into international citizens, who are able to contribute to issues related to local and global communities through intercultural awareness and understanding. It is our belief that we share a responsibility for helping make the world a better place for everyone to live in.

The action component of the IB-PYP can involve service in the widest sense of the word: service to fellow students, and to the larger community, both inside and outside of the school. Some examples of Action as Service projects from previous years include: Meals from the Heartland, Pennies for Peace, Animal Rescue League Donation Drive, School Supply Collections, and numerous others.

**AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS**

School dismisses at 3:00 p.m. each day (1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays). It is the parent’s responsibility to have clear plans for their child’s care after school whether that is parent pick-up, Metro Kids Care, off-site childcare, or participation in extra-curricular activities.

Students who are parent pick-up must be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m (no later than 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday dismissals).

Families are welcome to use the playground after school. However, students may not be on the playground after school without adult supervision.

**APPOINTMENTS/COMMUNCATION**

If you need to make an appointment with a teacher, the most effective way to do this is by email and stating the reason for the visit. Please do not use the time at drop-off or dismissal for having lengthy discussions with teachers due to confidentiality and since teachers have supervisory duties at those times. If you would like to visit the classroom, again, please let the teacher know. We appreciate your support.

There are times when you may wish to visit with the principal. You may at any time make an appointment through the office manager since a drop-in meeting is not always possible.

The school office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**ARRIVAL TIMES/SCHOOL DAY**

The school day officially begins at 8:15 a.m., but students should be in the gymnasium no later than 8:10 a.m. Students may arrive as early as 7:45 a.m. for breakfast in the cafeteria, or for Literacy Morning in the gymnasium. We ask that parents do not arrive before 7:45 a.m. as there is no supervision for students. Upon arriving at school, students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian up to the 2nd floor. Students may not come in from the street alone, or use the elevators without an adult.

Students may not enter classrooms before 8:10 a.m.

The school day is from 8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Students who are parent pick-up must be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m. (no later than 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday dismissals). If a pattern of late pick-ups becomes apparent, open enrollment status to attend WSS may be affected.

**BEHAVIORAL TEACHING & EXPECTATIONS**

WSS takes a strengths-based approach when supporting students with social, emotional and academic growth. We adhere to the *Responsive Classroom* approach to developing and maintaining a safe, challenging, and joyful school.

The *Responsive Classroom* approach consists of practical strategies for helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out. Seven principles guide this approach:

* The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
* How children learn is as important as what they learn: process and content go hand in hand.
* The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
* To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
* Knowing the children we teach – individually, culturally, and developmentally – is as important as knowing the content we teach.
* Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children’s education.
* How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

WSS institutes the following *Responsive Classroom* practices:

* ***Morning Meeting*** – gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
* ***Rule Creation*** – helping students create essential agreements that allow for all class members to meet their learning goals and those of the classroom community as a whole
* ***Positive Teacher Language*** – using words and tone to promote children’s active learning and self-discipline
* ***Logical Consequences*** – responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix, reflect upon, and learn from their mistakes
* ***Classroom Organization*** – setting up the physical space of the learning environment in ways that encourage independence, cooperation, and productivity
* ***Working with Families*** – hearing families’ insights and helping them understand the school’s teaching approaches
* ***Collaborative Problem Solving*** – using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to engage students in problem solving

At WSS, we expect students to:

* Work to constantly improve in all areas, academic and social.
* Respect self, others and property.
* Follow directions of WSS staff.
* Learn from mistakes and accept consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

Every classroom establishes a classroom management plan and routine procedures which are communicated clearly and regularly with students.

When a problem behavior is observed, staff will use one of several intervention strategies to help the child end the problem behavior and refocus on the desired task/activity. The following intervention strategies are used:

* **Proximity/non-verbal** – moving toward a student or standing within five feet of them to silently communicate the message that he/she needs to get on-task or stop the behavior.
* **Verbal Warning** – telling the student they need to get back on-task or stop the behavior.
* **Planned Ignoring** – intentionally ignoring a behavior when the function of the behavior is to gain attention. This is not utilized when the problem behavior is significant.
* **Praising Others for Appropriate Behavior** – this strategy puts the attention and focus of students on the desired behavior.
* **Private Conference with Student(s)** – having a discrete conversation with the student(s) to discuss the expectation, and how the problem behavior is affecting the learning environment.
* **Re-teach the Desired Behavior** – taking time to individually re-teach an expectation to student. This often involves role-playing or scenarios.
* **Time-Out/Reflection Sheet** – students who continue to demonstrate a problem behavior after one or more of the interventions have been attempted will take a time-out in the classroom or another classroom. Students will need to complete a behavior reflection sheet which will be sent home to be reviewed and signed by the parent.
* **Loss of Privilege** – students who continue to engage in the problem behavior after a time-out/reflection sheet will have a loss of privilege (recess, private dining, assembly, field trip, school activity, etc.).
* **In/Out-of-School Suspension** – on-going problem behaviors will result in an in or out-of-school suspension as determined by the principal.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are acknowledged in the classrooms. If parents wish to provide treats to share with the students in the classroom, they should notify the teacher at least a day in advance. Any treats must be store-bought and individually wrapped to meet school health and safety standards. We ask that you refrain from bringing in an overabundance of food; especially sugary treats that impact on some children’s cognitive ability and behavior. There is an abundance of research on how sugar can negatively impact on a child’s health.

If you bring treats to school for your child’s birthday, they must be brought to the school office. They will remain in the school office until 2:30 p.m. The treats will be taken to the classroom at 2:30 p.m.

We ask that balloons and flowers not be sent to school for a child’s birthday due to the disruption that creates to the school learning environment.

Additionally, students and parents are not to distribute birthday party invitations at school. Though we understand the value of these celebrations and activities, unless all students are invited, hurt feelings result and cause a disruption to the learning environment.

We appreciate your support with these items.

**BREAKFAST**

Breakfast begins being served at 7:45 a.m. Students need to arrive as close to 7:45 a.m. as possible to ensure they have adequate time to eat. The breakfast line will be closed at 8:00 a.m. Students have until 8:10 a.m. to finish eating and report to their assignment class spot for Literacy Morning.

**BUSING**

With Walnut Street School being a school-of-choice, parents are responsible for providing their own transportation to get children to and from school.

District busing is limited to students who qualify for this service due to special education needs or administrative ruling.

If a student who regularly commutes by school bus intends to use alternative transportation on a given day, please ensure the school office has been made aware of this change no later than 2:30 p.m. on the day affected. If the school does not have notification from parent about a change in transportation plan, the child will be expected to ride the school bus per their normal routine.

**CELL PHONES**

Elementary students are not to bring cell phones to school. Please visit with the school principal if you have questions.

**CLASSROOM PLACEMENT**

WSS recognizes the importance of thoughtful placement of students when moving from one grade level to the next. Placement of students into a new grade level is based on the premise of trying to maximize the learning opportunity for all students and creating a balance based on specific criteria. The following criteria are taken into consideration when the school is establishing new class rosters:

* Gender
* Academic abilities
* Balance of ethnicities/nationalities
* Students requiring special considerations (twins/siblings at the same grade level, some issues of special educational needs)
* Friendship patterns
* Learning styles

Classroom teachers draw upon detailed information in relation to these criteria to guide the process. Other school staff members (instructional coach, counselor, social worker, psychologist, and special education teachers) are consulted in the process. These constituents advise the principal.

Notice of class placement will occur at the Back-to-School Open House in late August. Teachers will not engage in discussion with parents about the process or the final placement of children in order to maintain confidentiality of student needs.

Requests from parents for specific teachers cannot be accommodated.

**DISMISSAL/PARENT PICK-UP**

School dismisses each day at 3:00 p.m. (Wednesday dismissals are at 1:30 p.m.).

Students who are parent pick-up must be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m. (no later than 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday dismissals). If a pattern of late pick-ups becomes apparent, open enrollment status to attend WSS may be affected.

Students who get picked up by parents/guardians will dismiss from Room 120 on the 1st floor. Students may not be taken from lines during transitions at dismissal time. Parents/guardians are asked to wait in the 1st floor lobby and hallway until their child is dismissed from the room. Parents/guardians must wait outside of Room 120.

Students will not be dismissed without a staff member on duty making contact with the adult that each child will be leaving with. If a staff member does not recognize an adult who has come to pick-up a child at dismissal, the staff member is obligated to ask to see a photo ID. This is for everyone’s safety.

Students who are enrolled in Metro Kids’ Care are taken by staff to the 3rd floor for after-school care. Students who typically get transported by district busing or private childcare vans assemble in the cafeteria and are dismissed once their bus/van arrives. Staff escorts students to their bus/van.

**EARLY DISMISSAL – WEDNESDAYS**

WSS and all Des Moines Public Schools dismiss every Wednesday for professional development. We embrace life-long learning and for educators the need and desire for continuous professional growth run deep. Schools today are charged with addressing ever-increasing demands: reducing the achievement gap, adopting evidence-based practices, meeting adequate yearly progress goals, managing the requirements of second-language and special-needs students, and remaining current on the increasing amount of pedagogical and content area research. Educators must keep abreast of the important advances that are occurring in education. This is where professional development comes in. It is important for our parents and the community to understand that these early dismissal Wednesdays are vital for us to be the most effective learning community possible. We appreciate parents, the community and the DMPS School Board for supporting educators with these valuable opportunities to improve our professional practice.

Early dismissal for WSS is every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.

**ELEVATORS**

Elevators are intended for use by parents and visitors to the school and Des Moines Public Schools Administrative Offices. Students may never use the elevators without being with a supervising adult. It is not common practice for staff to use the elevators with students. During the school day and during Metro Kids’ Care, students are expected to use the stairwells to get from one floor to another with a supervising adult.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

WSS utilizes email and the school website as the primary means for communicating with parents on a group basis. All WSS families are asked to provide the school with designated email addresses to which official school communications may be sent. These should be addresses that you check regularly, and it is essential that you update your address(es) as soon as possible should there be a change.

Over the course of the school year, the following types of school communications will be sent to you via email.

* Letters from the principal
* School newsletters
* Classroom information from teachers
* Announcements and reminders of school events
* Notices from our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Certain other official school communications will be sent to you via regular mail.

*Note: WSS email communication will be sent to you from addresses ending in @dmschools.org. If you use anti-spam software to filter incoming mail, please make sure to allow for receipt of email from @dmschools.org. If for some reason you believe you are not receiving school emails, please inform the school office.*

In regard to questions or concerns about day-to-day school matters, we encourage you to directly contact the appropriate member(s) of the school administration, teachers or staff, either in person or by telephone. You may also contact us by email; however, please be aware that the volume of email we receive can sometimes be overwhelming and responses delayed.

Email addresses for individual staff members are based on the following convention: [*firstname.lastname@dmschools.org*](mailto:firstname.lastname@dmschools.org)

WSS is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. We will only use the email address or addresses you provide for official school communications as described above. Under no circumstances will we divulge your email address to a third party.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Safety is a priority. As a result, fire, tornado and safety drills are carried out regularly throughout the year. Your child will be warned in advance for the first fire safety drill at the beginning of the school year. Future safety exercises will be carried out without advance warning. Parents visiting the school should make themselves familiar with safety procedures that are posted around the school.

**EVERYBODY WINS! IOWA**

Everybody Wins! Iowa is a literacy and mentoring non-profit organization that increases children's opportunities for success in school and life through one-on-one reading experiences with caring adults and older students. Everybody Wins! Iowa's signature program is the Power Lunch program which matches elementary school students one-to-one with community volunteers. Through this program, volunteer reading mentors visit their student for an hour once a week, during the students' lunch. Volunteers talk with the students, read aloud to students, have students read aloud to them, and instill positive attitudes about reading. The volunteers serve as role models, enhancing students' self-esteem and encouraging their success through these consistent, weekly, positive interactions. At WSS, we have the Power Lunch program for our 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. We try to match as many students as possible based on teacher recommendation and the availability of mentors.

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| **2014-2015 Everybody Wins! Iowa Schedule** | |
| 2nd Grade | Thursdays, 11:40-12:25 |
| 3rd Grade | Wednesdays, 11:40-12:25 |
| 4th Grade | Tuesdays, 12:15-1:00 |

We encourage parents to consider being a mentor for Everybody Wins! Iowa. You can get more information at [*www.everybodywinsiowa.org*](http://www.everybodywinsiowa.org).

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The WSS Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) offers various extra-curricular activities throughout the year. The Extra-Curricular Coordinator will provide information about these after-school activities. If you have questions, or suggestions, please contact a PTO Board member.

**FACEBOOK**

WSS PTO maintains a Facebook page. This is a great venue for current information and discussion. You can follow our PTO on Facebook at “Walnut Street School PTO”. We encourage you to “LIKE” our Facebook page and share it with others.

**FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Des Moines is an excellent venue for supporting the IB-PYP and the educational program. During the school year, field experiences will be scheduled to supplement and extend learning in the classroom. Teachers will notify parents of upcoming trips and often ask for parent volunteers to accompany the class.

Each family completed a blanket permission slip during the registration process. This blanket permission slip serves as granted permission for all field experiences during the school year.

If parents do not want their child to attend a specific field experience, they must contact the classroom teacher in writing.

**HEALTH/NURSE**

WSS has a part-time nurse on duty. Our nurse is shared with another nearby elementary school. Our school nurse is at WSS for approximately two hours each day.

If you have health-related questions, please contact our school nurse, Jean Smith, at [*jean.smith@dmschools.org*](mailto:jean.smith@dmschools.org).

**HOMEWORK**

Parents are requested to read to, or listen to their children read for at least 20 minutes every night.

Parents are asked to also support their children with fact fluency. Mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts of these foundational skills is critical in order for students to access more challenging mathematical processes.

Occasionally, classrooms will assign homework related to IB-PYP units of inquiry which may require research at home or support in gathering items for a project.

Other homework will be assigned at the teacher’s discretion.

**LIBRARY**

Students who are registered at the school may check out the allotted number of books from the school library. Each class has a scheduled time each week to visit the school library. Students are to be responsible for the care and timely return of all library books. Only students who return their library books will have the privilege of checking out books weekly. The school will charge a replacement fee for lost or damaged books and school property. Any parent who wishes to rescind the library privilege for their child may contact the principal in writing.

**LITERACY MORNING**

WSS has Literacy Morning each day from 7:45 a.m. until 8:10 a.m. on 2nd floor. Literacy Morning is intended to be a quiet start to the day that allows students to engage their brains before getting to their classrooms. Additionally, Literacy Morning is supportive of parents for drop-off since parking is limited downtown. Families who arrive prior to 8:00 a.m. have the least issues with parking.

When students arrive for Literacy Morning, they are expected to sit in their assigned classroom location and read or look at books quietly until classroom teachers come to get them at 8:10 a.m. to start the instructional day. Students may bring their own books from home, or a writing/drawing activity to do during Literacy Morning. However, students may not bring toys, games, or electronic devices to use during Literacy Morning.

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| **Literacy Morning – Grade Level Locations** | |
| Preschool | Cafeteria |
| Kindergarten | Hallway behind school office |
| 1st Grade | Cafeteria |
| 2nd Grade | Gymnasium |
| 3rd Grade | Gymnasium |
| 4th Grade | Gymnasium |
| 5th Grade | Gymnasium |

Please do not bring students before 7:45 a.m. as there will not be supervision.

Students are not to enter classrooms before 8:10 a.m.

**LOST & FOUND**

WSS will keep a Lost & Found area on 1st floor. Students and parents are encouraged to check the Lost & Found area regularly for lost and misplaced items. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity organization at the end of each month.

**LUNCH VISITORS**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to join their children from lunch. Parents should sign-in at the office before proceeding to the cafeteria.

Parents may order a lunch from school. In order to do so, please call the school office before 9:00 a.m. Parents are also welcome to bring their own lunch and even bring a lunch for their child. However, food may not be brought for other children. Food may not be shared with other children.

**MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL**

With the exception of lip balm and cough drops, all medications given at school must be prescribed by a physician. Written parental consent is required for medications to be given at school. To make sure that giving medications at school is as safe for your child as possible, medications must be in the original pharmacy container appropriately labeled with the student’s name and details for giving the medication. Whenever possible and appropriate, families and physicians are encouraged to schedule medications to be given at home under parental supervision so as to not unnecessarily disrupt your child’s learning day.

If you need to have medications administered at school, you will need to complete the necessary forms. These are available in the school office.

**METRO KIDS CARE**

Metro Kids Care is a district program that offers on-site before and after school care for students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Program times are from 6:30 a.m. until school starts and then again from school dismissal until 5:45 p.m. This is a fee-based program with a variety of offerings to support families’ childcare needs. If you are interested in this program, please contact the Metro Kids Care office at 242-7951.

**PARENT CONTACT/EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

It is essential that parents keep the school office informed of any changes to phone numbers, emails, and emergency contact numbers. Each family fills out a form as they register each year, but this data may often change during the school year. In order for the school to be able to contact you at any time regarding your child, please always give this new information to the school office.

**PARENT SUPPORT**

The research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children’s learning is positively related to achievement. The research indicates that the more intensively parents are involved in the children’s learning, the more a child achieves and works to his/her potential. Further, parent involvement is positively related to benefits other than student achievement. These benefits include attitude toward school or toward particular subject areas, self-concept, motivation, classroom behavior, and expectations for one’s future.

Given the importance of parental involvement, WSS expects parents to support their child’s education in the following ways:

* Be patient and supportive.
* Celebrate your child’s accomplishments. Do not compare them with others. Each child is unique and learns differently.
* Make sure your child gets enough sleep (8-10 hours per night) and eats nutritious, balanced meals, especially breakfast.
* Be open to discussion of your child’s academic, as well as social, and personal successes and struggles.
* Communicate with your child that his/her effort, progress, and achievement are equally valued. Students will do their best by doing their own work.
* Ask your child about their day at school. Ask about the day’s lessons and what your child learned. Show an interest as your child describes the school day. Share your own learning experiences and show your child resources that you may have in your own home that relate to your child’s learning experiences.
* Ask your child what school projects that may have to complete and offer your help and support.
* Encourage your child to bring home books to read from the school library.
* Set aside at least 20 minutes per night to read with your child or for them to read independently. Take some time to discuss what is being read.
* Encourage your child to write letters to family and friends.
* Communicate the importance of education and school attendance to your child. Arrange family vacations around the school calendar.

**PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

WSS has a very active and engaged Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). All parents and guardians of children currently enrolled at WSS are automatically members of our PTO. There is no fee for membership.

The aims of the WSS PTO are:

* Promoting and improving the quality of education and environment at WSS by supporting and providing financial and human resources for the growth and early development, academic and environmental goals set forth by the PTO and school administration.
* Facilitating open communication between parents, teachers, the school, and the community.
* Providing financial resources through fundraising activities that shall be used for projects and other activities for WSS students, faculty, and staff.
* Acting as a coordinating body for all members of the PTO who would like to volunteer their time at WSS and/or contribute their resources.

The PTO has been instrumental in providing extracurricular activities for our students like martial arts, gymnastics, dance, theater and Spanish classes, to name just a few.

Additionally, the WSS PTO has planned and orchestrated many family events. Some of these have included Cultural Night, Family Fun Nights, Family Picnics, Movie Nights, and Game Nights.

Monthly meetings are scheduled and all parents and staff are encouraged to participate. Additionally, you can follow our PTO on Facebook at “Walnut Street School PTO” to stay informed about PTO activities.

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| **2013-2014 PTO Board Officers** | |
| President | Dierdre Goodrich |
| Co-Vice Presidents | Anna Hyatt-Crozier and Analisa Pearson |
| Secretary | Cheri Jimenez |
| Co-Treasurers | Dustin and Claire Olsem |

**PARKING**

WSS is located in downtown Des Moines. As a result, parking is limited and can be challenging. Families are always encouraged to keep change in their vehicles to use at the city parking meters. Metered parking is available along Walnut Street to the west of the school, along Locust Street to the north of the school and along 9th and 10th Streets beside the school and on the blocks just north and south of the school.

The City of Des Moines does work with WSS for limited drop-off and pick-up parking along 9th and 10th Streets for those who follow the posted street signage and display a WSS Parking Badge. Parents are responsible for adhering to the parking signage and regulations posted by the City of Des Moines.

The parking lot on the west side of the school building is very limited in number of spaces available. Parents and visitors are welcome to use these spots if they are available. Parking in this lot is limited to 30 minutes. Double-parking or parking in unmarked areas is prohibited. Violators will have their vehicles towed at the owner’s expense.

Many nearby businesses and organizations hold events which result in street closures near the school. When we are aware of this information, we will pass it along to families. However, we do not always have this information.

Several nearby parking garages are available for use at an hourly or daily rate.

WSS and the DMPS district are not responsible for parking tickets or violations of parents and visitors.

**PEANUT-SAFE POLICY**

There are individuals at WSS who have severe allergies to peanuts and peanut products. Such allergies are potentially life threatening, as the affected individual can experience anaphylactic shock by consuming, touching or even smelling food with peanuts in it. Recognizing the seriousness of this health risk, WSS follows a peanut-safe policy. In addition to not using peanuts and peanut products in food served or sold in the WSS cafeteria, this means that all students and staff are asked to refrain from bringing to school or on school-related trips any food products that contain peanuts, peanut oil and peanut butter. Although we recognize this may be an inconvenience for some, given the potentially dire consequences for individuals with peanut allergies, we believe this policy is necessary and thank the WSS community for their understanding and cooperation.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY**

To avoid damage, loss, theft, or disruption of learning, please do not allow your children to bring personal items including gum, candy, toys, cell phones, electronic devices, or other items to school.

**PRE-SERVICE EDUCATORS**

WSS is supportive of pre-service educators. We work closely with area colleges and universities to provide authentic classroom experiences for pre-service educators in the form of short-term practicums (one to four weeks), or longer-term student-teaching placements (eight to twelve weeks). Please help welcome our pre-service educators into our learning community throughout the school year.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress Reports are sent home with students three times during the school year, in the fall, winter and at the end of the school year. The purpose of the Progress Report is to:

* Interpret student achievement and effort relative to the student’s abilities.
* Highlight areas of merit and/or concern.
* Strengthen communication between the school and the home.

You are encouraged to discuss the Progress Report with your child and to contact the classroom teacher should you have any questions or would like to discuss it further.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Parents are asked to provide a few school supplies for each child. The listed of school supplies is provided during school registration. Unless noted specifically, school supplies are used as community goods in each classroom and throughout the school. Other necessary school supplies are provided by the school.

Students should not bring items other than what is requested. Any additional items brought to school by students will be returned home with the children.

**SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

The Des Moines Public Schools District provides a recorded message that is updated if there are cancellations or delays.

If school is delayed or cancelled due to severe weather or some other emergency, the decisions will be announced to Des Moines radio and television stations.

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM**

WSS maintains a Student Support Team (SST) to assist with problem-solving specific concerns for individual students with challenges in academics and/or behavior. The SST consists of teachers from various grade levels and specialists. The SST will work closely with parents when an area of concern is evident. The SST will meet with the parents and classroom teacher to discuss the area of concern and to develop an intervention plan to support the child. The intervention plan is typically monitored for six to eight weeks during which time data is collected to measure the success of the intervention plan. The SST, parents and classroom teacher will come back together for a review date to determine the impact of the intervention. A decision is made to continue to intervention, adjust the intervention, or to seek additional support services. The SST is a powerful process which is intended to support individual needs.

**TELEPHONE**

If students must contact home, they may use the telephone in the school office or their classroom after gaining permission from the office manager or a teacher to do so. The use of the telephone will be restricted to important issues. If you need to leave a message for your child, the office staff will take the message and will pass it along to the student at a suitable time.

**TRANSPORTATION**

With Walnut Street School being a school-of-choice, parents are responsible for providing their own transportation to get children to and from school.

The school does work with nearby childcare centers that will provide transportation to and from school. Please contact the school office to find out which childcare centers currently provide this service at our school.

District busing is limited to students who qualify for this service due to special education needs or administrative ruling.

**VACATIONS**

Families are asked to schedule vacations for times when school is out of sessions, winter break, spring break and/or summer break. Vacations are not approved absences according to the district attendance policy.

**VISITORS**

We believe the most successful education of children depends on effective parent involvement and we welcome your visit. Before visiting any classroom, we ask that you stop by the office and sign-in. All visitors will be provided with a Visitor Badge. When leaving, please stop by the office to return the Visitor Badge and to sign-out. The sign-in and sign-out process allows us to know who is in the building and helps protect everyone in school.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are an important component of our school. We welcome parents and other adults who are willing to give their time and talents to others. Students and staff appreciate the support of our volunteers.

Volunteers are always helpful in classrooms and the library with projects and on-going tasks needed by staff. Please visit with teachers about opportunities to support in their classrooms.

All volunteers must complete the required District Volunteer Application process before beginning as a volunteer. These materials are available in the school office.

**WEBSITE**

The school website is a valuable place for up-to-date information. Please consider bookmarking the website. The website is <http://walnutstreet.dmschools.org/>

**WITHDRAWAL**

If you need to withdraw from Walnut Street School at any time during the school year, please let the school office know immediately of your withdrawal date. This will allow us to support your child with the transition and it also allows us to get student records prepared for their new school.

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**Thank you for your support of**

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