



West End Secondary School

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Wonder, Compassion, Creativity, Resilience

www.westendsecondary.com

2024-2025 WESS Student Handbook



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WESS CORE VALUES

At West End Secondary School, our mission is to empower students to achieve at the highest level by cultivating their innate curiosity and nurturing their natural ability to wonder and create. A WESS education emphasizes creativity, discovery, and resilience, as well as the central role that the student plays in his or her own learning process, understanding that students learn best when they discern the value in learning and enjoy getting there. Graduates will leave WESS equipped to confront new challenges with confidence & an inner reserve of fortitude that naturally arises from conquering material that once seemed too complicated.

- **Creativity:** We inspire our students to envision, formulate, and compose—to bring to life an altogether new and original insight or interpretation. We believe that nothing leads more directly to a feeling of value and self-worth than to do something novel, fresh, and enlightening. In encouraging creativity, we nourish the independent spirit within us that seeks expression.
- **Wonder:** We believe that wonder is the spark that propels our students to explore further and question the world around them. When we cultivate inquiring minds through investigation and exploration, students enthusiastically immerse themselves in the learning process, seek knowledge for its own sake, and delight in being amazed at what they discover, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.
- **Compassion:** We learn to demonstrate compassion through both word and deed, to care deeply about others and what befalls them. We develop our students' ability to feel what another feels and acknowledge that this evolves over time. Compassion is the most genuine and heartfelt identification outside of the self, extending to all living things as we continually seek to understand the circumstances and viewpoints of others. The true practice of compassion continuously recharges itself by inspiring us to promote a peaceful and caring community of learners.
- **Resilience:** We believe that abilities can be cultivated. We are passionate about extending ourselves, even when confronted by challenges. We foster an environment that converts life's setbacks into future successes. Consequently, we surpass what we thought was possible and emerge with a sense of fulfillment. Personal growth of this nature results not only in improved self-awareness and confidence, but in a



deeper, more profound wisdom that accompanies our students when they embrace challenge and value effort.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

School Starts at 8:30 am. Attendance is key to student success. Reporting late compromises the learning experience in the course and jeopardizes earning course credit. All classes, including electives and Crew are credit-bearing courses that meet [New York City high school diploma requirements](#). With that said, students must report to school at **8:30 am**. We expect all students to be outside by **8:15 am**, so there's ample time to swipe at arrival, make it to lockers, and be prepared for class. We give students a five-minute grace period at the start of the first period. After **8:35 am**, students are late.

Consequences: Besides missing instructional time for being late, middle and high school students will receive a phone call home and serve one day of lunch detention if they come to school late three times in the semester. It means if the student is in high school they will not leave the school building for lunch and middle school will not go out for recess. High school students in lunch removal will have the option of eating school lunch or bagged lunch from home. A pattern of lateness will lead to an indefinite suspension of outside lunch

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN PERIODS

Students are expected to report to their next period class within three minutes. Most high school classes are concentrated on the third floor, and those on other floors do not require much travel time. While we don't discourage students from socializing while traveling to class, we want to raise the importance of punctuality, so that instructional time is maximized at all times.

Consequences: If there's a pattern of tardiness (i.e., late three or more times), the teacher will document it in Jumprope, reach out to a guardian/parent, and report it to Milton and Lynne for middle school students and Pamela and Jozef for high school students. Additionally, the student will serve one day of **lunch detention**. It means the high school student will lose the privilege of leaving the building for lunch during their lunch period. Students in the high school serving lunch detention will have the option to eat school food or food from home in Pamela's office. Please note the student is not allowed to order food for delivery. If tardiness continues, outside lunch privileges will be suspended indefinitely.



LUNCH PERIOD RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Besides nourishing your body with food, the lunch period is an opportunity to reset and relax between classes. With that said, students must adhere to school rules during lunch periods.

1. Eat lunch only in the cafeteria and not in the hallways and classrooms.
2. No ordering food to be delivered to the building. Please coordinate deliveries outside the building during your lunch period only. You are only allowed to accept the delivery from outside the building. The delivery person can not come inside the building.
3. Return to lunch 2-5 minutes before the end of the period.

NOTE: If outside lunch is suspended because of continued infractions, the student will be allowed to earn the right to restore the harm caused to the community by participating in a restorative circle.

High School Student Lunch Contract: Click [here](#) to access the student contract for lunch release. If you are coming in late to lunch, you will need to scan the QR and complete a Google form.

Tardiness from outside lunch

Students must return to the building on time and have their student ID card ready to swipe at the main entrance. Students who are late returning from lunch will need to scan the QR code and complete the survey. Students who are late will receive the following consequences:

- **First Offense** - A warning
- **Second Offense** - Loss of Open Lunch privileges for one day
- **Third Offense** - Loss of Open Lunch privileges for the week

Continually returning late from lunch will result in the suspension of lunch privileges indefinitely.



BATHROOM POLICY:

Please use the bathrooms for their intended purpose. Students **MUST** take the laminated hallway pass and are required to sign the classroom bathroom log prior to leaving and then when returning to the classroom. The purpose of this log is to keep track of the whereabouts of students in the event of an emergency and to track/trace inappropriate behaviors. **Students are NOT permitted to use the bathroom during the first and last 5 minutes of class.**

The bathrooms are closed on all 3 floors during the transition, the first 5 minutes and the last 5 minutes of the period.



Emergency Preparedness Procedures

4 Actions: The General Response Protocol



Shelter- In



Evacuate



**Lockdown
Soft/Hard**



HOLD!



Shelter- In



"Attention, this is a Shelter- In. Secure the exit doors."

- **A Shelter- In would be used in different conditions that may include:**
 - **Dangerous weather conditions**
 - **Police activity in the immediate vicinity of the school.**
 - **Other hazardous/ dangerous conditions outside of the building**

When first responders arrive, they will provide direction and assistance to school officials.





Shelter- In



Students:

- 1- Will be secured inside of the building.**
- 2- Will be reminded that classes continue as usual. However, once the exit doors have been secured, no one will be permitted to enter or leave the building until the Shelter-In has ended.**
- 3- Must listen to all announcements as directions may change during each incident.**

Teachers:

- 1-Will increase situational awareness.**
- 2-Will conduct business as usual.**
- 3-Must follow all announced directions and remember that the Shelter- In directive remains in effect until they hear the announcement "TheShelter-In has been lifted".**

Remember that BRTmembers, floor wardens and School Safety Agents will ensure that all perimeter doors and floors posts are secured and monitored until the Shelter- In has ended.



Questions:

What do we do if we are outside during a Shelter- In?



Inside the school we conduct business as usual.

If you are stuck outside on lunch report to either West End Ave or Amsterdam Avenue, once we get clearance from law enforcement you will be allowed back in the building



Evacuate



- **The fire alarm will signal an evacuation.**
- **When the PA system is used, directions will be specific.**
- **The primary objective is to move staff and students in an orderly fashion, and make sure that everyone is together when arriving at specific destinations.**





Evacuate

Students:

- Leave your belongings behind.
Form a single file line.
- Remain silent and listen for additional evacuation instructions.
- Go to the stated location with your class as identified in the evacuation poster.



In fire or smoke conditions we:

- Might be asked to hold hands of another person
- Might be asked to cover their heads



After a lockdown, we might be directed to exit with our hands raised.

If you are gets separated from the class, immediately find an adult and tell them you are separated from your class. They will help.



Lockdown



It is important to remember that we use a soft or hard lockdown depending on the specific incident.





Soft Lockdown Review

Soft lockdown is used when there is an incident within the school and it is safe for the BRT and School Safety Agents to sweep the floors



- Remember: **Soft Lockdown = SAFE TO SWEEP**

Students are trained to move out of sight within their classrooms, offices, or common areas and maintain silence and teachers are trained to:



- Check the hallway outside of their classrooms for students, lock classroom doors, and turn the lights off.
- Move away from sight and maintain silence.
- Wait for the “All Clear” message: “the lockdown has been lifted,” followed by specific directions.



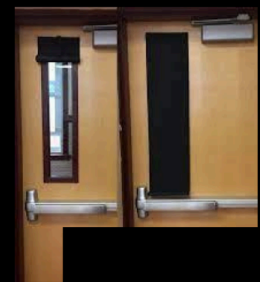
Lockdown



Teachers: –Check the hall for students immediately outside your classroom and lock the classroom door – Turn the lights out and keep the window shades open –Move away from the“line of sight”through the door vision

panel

- Maintain silence**
- Take silent/visual attendance to account for students**



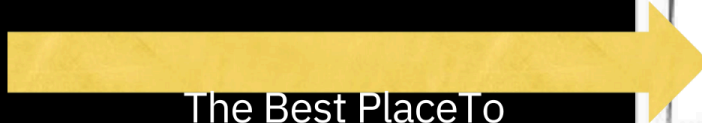


The classroom door will
be closed and locked

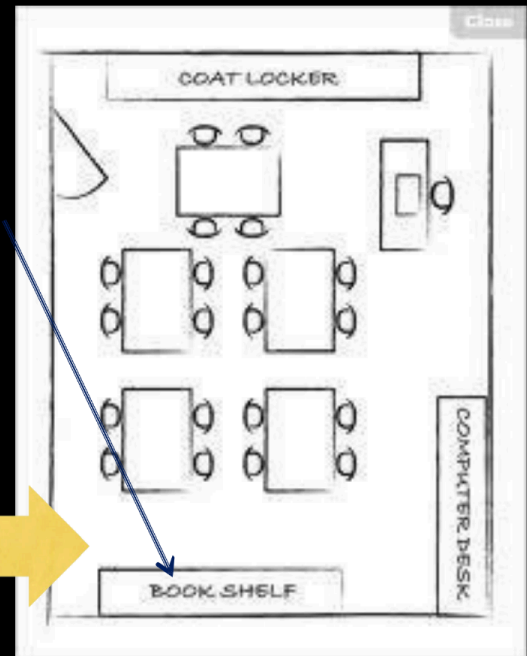


Lockdown

Avoiding the “line of sight”

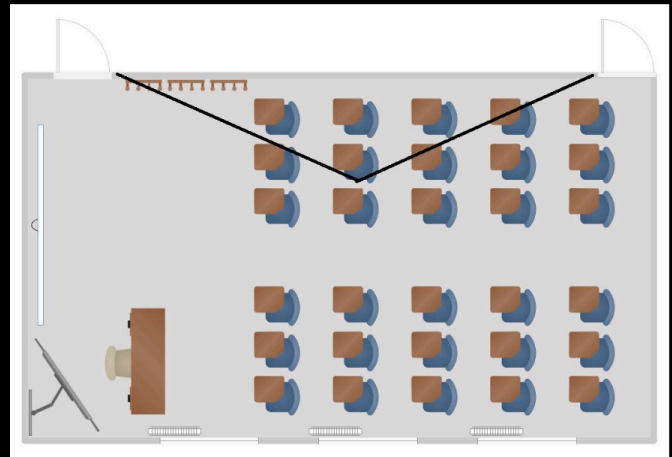
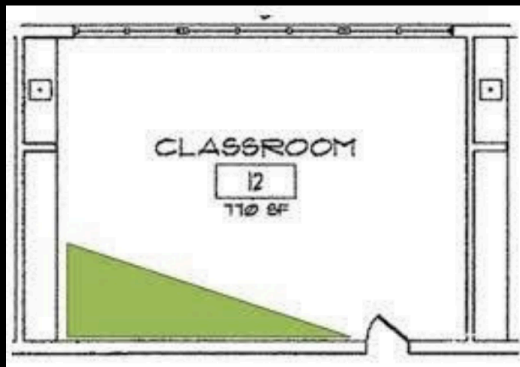


The Best Place To
Remain With The Door
Locked





Avoiding the “line of sight”





Hard Lockdown Review: Run, Hide, Fight

Hard Lockdown is used in the most extreme incidents where there is an active threat which can include someone with a weapon or causing harm.

Actions for Hard Lockdown remain the same as a Soft Lockdown for classrooms and offices but it is important to remember these critical actions to take:

- Run:** if near an exit door at the time of an active threat incident, it might be safer to run out of building and contact 911. It also may be necessary to run to the closest office or classroom in order to hide.
- Remind everyone that when in areas like the cafeteria or auditorium (or other common area) hiding may be impossible and self-evacuation may be necessary. Follow the directions of the adults.
- Hide:** when necessary to remain in Hard Lockdown, ensure that **everyone** can hide behind a door and remain silent. In some circumstances where a door needs to be fortified, it may be necessary to re-position objects within the classroom or office as a barricade.
- Confront (fight):** If faced with an imminent threat in their room or office, individuals may need to confront (fight) their attacker. It is important to assess the ability to confront with items already in the classroom such as chairs, window pole, Lysol type sprays, etc.



HOLD



Hold will be initiated to manage an incident or building condition which does not place the school community in danger, or when directed by First Responders.

Hold does not replace a soft or hard lockdown.

When the Hold action is initiated, staff, students, and visitors must remain in place when the Hold announcement is made. Individuals will conduct business as usual until the "All Clear" is announced.

The BRT and School Safety Agents will address the issue and conduct a building sweep. Anyone found in restrooms, hallways, stairwells, or the lobby will be taken to a designated area until the "All Clear" announcement is made.



HOLD



"Attention, this is a Hold. All staff, students, and visitors are to remain where they are until you hear the All Clear."

Students: Remain in place until the "All Clear" is announced.

Teachers/staff: Close and lock the classroom/office door.

Teachers/staff: Call the main office and report the names of any students who were using the classroom pass when the Hold was announced.

Teachers/staff: Instruction/business may continue.

EVERYONE WILL IGNORE THE END OF CLASS SIGNAL AND WAIT FOR THE "ALL CLEAR."



HOLD:

No movement from the building. Everyone must remain where they are until hearing the "All Clear."

HOLD is initiated when there is a condition inside the school building, and the immediate need to address the condition requires staff, students, and visitors to remain in place and conduct business as usual until the "All Clear" is announced.

"HOLD" might be initiated to manage an incident in the building that **does not** pose the school community in danger, or otherwise directed by First Responders.

HOLD does not require a soft or hard lockdown.

The Building Response Team and School Safety Agents will keep the Building, Anyone found in the restrooms, hallways, stairwells, or the lobby will be taken to a designated area until the "All Clear" announcement is made.


Announcements must be made to remind everyone to disengage any "hold of class" signs. No one may enter or leave their room or office until the announcement is made indicating that the "All Clear" has been issued and the building can return to regular operation.

During a "hold", entering the school must be informed of the hold. If students are coming from outside, they must be escorted to a designated area where they can remain, until proper personnel until the "All Clear" announcement is made.

Public Address:

The public address announcement for HOLD is, "Attention, this is a HOLD. All staff, students, and visitors are to remain where they are until they hear the All Clear." This is updated once from the announcement.

When You Hear It, Hold It!



HOLD!

Active: All announcements

Hold:

- + **ALD** will be initiated to manage an incident or building condition which **does not** place the school community in danger, or when directed by First Responders.

Students:

- + **ALD**
- + **Hold**
- + **CLP**
- + **CLP**
- + **CLP**

Teachers:

- + **Hold**
- + **CLP**
- + **CLP**
- + **CLP**
- + **CLP**

The BIRT and School Safety Agents will address the issue and conduct a building sweep. Anyone found in restrooms, hallways, stairwells, or the lobby will be taken to a designated area until the "All Clear" announcement is made.

HOLD: DOES NOT require moving to the safe corner of classrooms or offices.

The announcement (made two times) is:

"Attention, this is a **Hold**. All staff, students, and visitors are to remain where they are until they hear the "All Clear."

Buildings: Remain in place until the "All Clear" is announced.

Instructional: Close and lock the classroom door.

Business: Call the main office and report the names of any students who were using the classroom space when the Hold was announced.

Instructional: Instructional/business may continue.

Hold:

ALD







CLP

CLP

CLP

CLP

EVERYONE WILL IGNORE THE END OF CLASS SIGNAL AND WAIT FOR THE "ALL CLEAR."



ELECTRONICS POLICY

Cell phones or ear devices are not to be used in class unless it's a resource the teacher approved to be used to support learning. Students are not permitted to make any phone calls in the main office between or during classes. If the student must call home, the call must be made at lunch or immediately after school. Please review the [school policy](#) and the individual grade policy.





- 6th grade [policy](#)
- 7th grade [policy](#)
- 8th grade [policy](#)
- 9th grade [policy](#)
- 10th grade [policy](#)
- 11th grade [policy](#)
- 12th grade [policy](#)

Use of Electronics in the classroom

Students who use electronics whilst in the classroom will be reminded with the following norms:

Electronic Device Norms FOR THE CLASSROOM

To create an optimal learning environment, please refrain from inappropriate use of electronic devices to avoid disruptions. Failure to comply will result in the following actions:

-  At the beginning of class/ entry, the teacher will make a general announcement for all students to put all devices away (phones, tablets, Air pods, headphones).
-  The teacher will give a non-verbal cue/verbal reminder to the student(s) who are continuing to use their device to put their device away.
-  The teacher will have a restorative conversation with the individual student(s) reminding them to put the device away and this the 3rd reminder
-  Advise the student(s) that they are to take a pass and go to the restorative team regarding not following the norms and there will be contact with home.

Chancellor's Regulation A-413: Violation and Confiscation of Electronic Devices

Students who use electronic devices in violation of school rules will face disciplinary action as outlined in the Discipline Code. If a student's device is confiscated due to repeated violations, the principal or their designee must promptly contact the student's parent/guardian for a restorative conference and return the confiscated device to the parent/guardian.

1st step - The teacher will make a general announcement for all students to put all devices away (phones, tablets, Air pods, headphones).

2nd step - Have a nonverbal cue to the student(s) who are continuing to use their device

3rd step - A restorative quiet conversation to ask the student to put their phone away.

4th step - Give the office pass to the student and instruct them to meet with the restorative team regarding their excessive electronic device usage. Document the usage and contact the parent if this is a recurring issue.

"Please note: It is requested that teachers refrain from confiscating electronic devices from individual students as doing so may potentially disrupt the learning environment and lead to conflicts."



STUDENT LOCKERS 6-12

Lockers are assigned to students across all grades. Each student is assigned one locker during Crew. The locker is used solely for storage of outerwear and school materials. **The locker is NOT student property** and WESS staff members have the right to open and inspect the locker at any time. Locker inspections will be held on a regular basis and without notice.

Students are responsible for purchasing their own **combination only locks** and remembering their combinations. They must also provide their Crew teacher with the combination. A copy of this combination will also be kept on file in the main office.

Students must also adhere to the following:

1. Food items are to be removed by the end of each school day.
2. Students are solely responsible for the contents of their lockers and should not share their lockers with other students; nor divulge locker combinations to other students.
3. Lockers must be in the same condition at the end of the school year as they were in the beginning of the school year.
4. Students are not to write, place stickers, or vandalize lockers in any manner.
5. Students may not use lockers during class time.
6. WESS students will have access to lockers during the following time slots:
 - Between 8:25 am- 8:29 am each morning
 - Just before lunch to retrieve lunch and store belongings.
 - Just after lunch.
 - After dismissal at the end of the school day
 - Any student attending an after-school activity must retrieve all belongings from their locker prior to attending the after-school activity.

Event Advertising Policy for Students

Students involved in clubs, sports, or group activities who wish to promote an event or message to the school community must first seek review from their advisor or coach. Following this, the advertisement must receive approval from an assistant principal or the principal.

Once approved, students are permitted to post their advertisements on designated bulletin boards throughout the school. Advertisements placed outside of these designated areas will be removed.



SCHOOL CALENDAR

Date	Weekday	Event
September 5	Thursday	First day of school
September 26	Thursday	Evening Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K-12, and 6-12 schools
October 3-4	Thursday-Friday	Rosh Hashanah, schools closed
October 14	Monday	Italian Heritage/Indigenous Peoples' Day, schools closed
November 1	Friday	Diwali, schools closed
November 5	Tuesday	Election Day, students do not attend school
November 11	Monday	Veterans Day, schools closed



November 21	Thursday	Afternoon and Evening Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K-12, and 6-12 schools
November 22	Friday	Afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K-12, and 6-12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early
November 28-29	Thursday-Friday	Thanksgiving Recess, schools closed
December 24-January 1	Tuesday-Wednes day	Winter Recess, schools closed
January 20	Monday	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, schools closed
January 21-24	Tues-Friday	Regents Administration



January 27	Monday	Professional Development Day, schools closed for students
January 28	Tuesday	First day of Spring Semester
January 29	Wednesday	Lunar New Year, schools closed
February 17–21	Monday–Friday	Midwinter Recess, schools closed
March 20	Thursday	Evening Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools
March 21	Friday	Afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early



March 31	Monday	Eid al-Fitr, schools closed
April 14–18	Monday–Friday	Spring Recess, schools closed
May 15	Thursday	Evening Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools
May 16	Friday	Afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools
May 26	Monday	Memorial Day, schools closed
June 5	Thursday	Eid al-Adha / Anniversary Day; schools closed
June 10	Tuesday	The first administration of the new Regents Examinations in Life



		Science: Biology, and Earth and Space Sciences
June 11	Wednesday	The first administration of the new Regents Examination in Geometry
June 17- 26	Tuesday-Thursday	Regents Administration
June 19	Thursday	Juneteenth, schools closed
June 26	Thursday	Last day of school for students



2024 - 2025 School Year WESS Bell Schedule

Period 1 - 8:30 - 9:15

Period 2 - 9:17 - 10:03

Period 3 - 10:05 - 10:51

Period 4 - 10:53 - 11:39 (Lunch -HS/7th grade)

Period 5 - 11:41 - 12:27 (Lunch - HS/6th grade)

Period 6 - 12:29 - 1:15 (Lunch - HS/8th grade)

Period 7 - 1:17 - 2:03 (Lunch - HS)

Period 8 - 2:05 - 2:50

*The bell schedule indicates the start time and end time for each class period.

**Students are not to be released earlier than that time.



Restorative Practices at WESS

At WESS we commit to restorative practices to build community, celebrate accomplishments, intervene when poor choices are made, transform conflict that may occur between adults or young people, and rebuild relationships that have been damaged. We commit to building and strengthening our community daily through the 4 core value commitments of, Compassion, Perseverance, Creativity, and Wonder and the Habits of Work and Leadership; these are reinforced through crew, classes, and shared spaces.

We use the language of 100% Respect to communicate expectations and to reinforce the shared values that have been co-created with our youth led Restorative Practices Equity Team and students. We understand the damage caused by zero-tolerance policies and the impact that suspensions and classroom removals have on a child's chances of academic and life success. We, therefore, seek positive solutions to harm done to the community to strengthen students' sense of belonging to the community and to reduce time out of class.

The school's Restorative Practice Coordinators/Counseling team helps to coordinate a positive, restorative climate and uses resources for teachers, students, and parents to facilitate both community building and community restoration. Feel free to connect with them for support even if you are not involved in an incident.

They are:

Restorative Practices Support Team

★ JOZEF Restorative Practices Coordinator	★ PAMELA Assistant Principal MS	★ TAMMY School Counselor HS
★ JOE Principal	★ JESSICA Assistant Principal HS	★ NASTASSJA School Social Worker
★ NIKKI RPET and PEER Mediator Support	★ MILTON Restorative Practices Middle School Coach	★ MICHELLE School Counselor MS
★ CREW LEADERS	★ LYNNE Assistant Principal Operations	

This table below reflects what behaviors do not reflect the 4 core values and commitments and how WESS staff aim to restore any harm to the community, relationships or individuals as a result of those actions.



DISRUPTION LEVEL 1 AND 2

ACTIONS

- Not following directions
- Disrupting the learning environment
- Chronic lateness
- Cutting Class or leaving for a long period without authorization
- Engaging in rude or disrespectful behavior
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices
- Play fighting

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Restorative conversation with the teacher
- Documentation in Jump Rope
- Teacher contacts home (email, call, text)
- If there is a pattern of these actions send a Jump rope referral to the crew teacher and a Restorative Coach
- Restorative Circle (Tier 1)

DISRESPECT LEVEL 3

ACTIONS

- Continual Insubordination from Levels 1 and 2
- Instigating others
- Discriminatory name-calling
- Leaving the building without ID or permission
- Aggressive behavior (cursing, threatening, hitting)
- Vaping or Smoking
- Cheating or plagiarism

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Contact parents/guardians
- Referral In Jump Rope to RJ coordinator and crew leader
- Conversation with RJ coordinator/Assistant Principal
- Restorative circle (Tier 2) with 15 day plan

THREATENING SAFETY LEVEL 4 AND 5

ACTIONS

- Fighting/Threatening behavior
- Theft/stealing
- Gang activity
- Sexual harassment (Verbal and Physical)
- Possession of weapons,
- Possession of and distribution of drugs, or alcohol
- Destruction of school property
- Cyberbullying or bullying

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Call Admin/RJ Coordinator/ School Safety Immediately
- Class removal to B39/313/216
- Contact parents
- Restorative circle (Tier 3) with parents and Administration
- Suspension
- Superintendents Suspension



GRADING POLICY

A school-wide grading policy aims to provide a common language to all stakeholders of a student's journey toward mastering course content standards throughout the school year. Grades provide feedback to students and families about academic progress, influence students' motivation and engagement in their learning, inform instructional and programmatic decisions and shape postsecondary outcomes. Our goal, as in any school year, is to align with the NYCDOE and NYC Outward Bound in the vision for [culturally responsive-sustaining education](#) and promote the following:

- **Accuracy:** Sharpen our focus on accurately measuring what we expect students to demonstrate in their learning so that we maintain high expectations for all students.
- **Equity:** Minimize the effects of bias and eliminate practices that penalize students who have been marginalized based on their race, culture, language, and/or ability.
- **Social-emotional well-being:** Contribute to a positive learning culture that promotes academic risk-taking and social-emotional well-being.

MASTERY BASED GRADING

Mastery Based Grading also known as *Standards Based Grading* focuses on student learning. Grades are based on demonstrated understanding of specific *Learning Targets* (LTs). These LTs indicate exactly what students should know and be able to do in each academic content area. Instead of a simple letter, students receive grades in multiple different learning targets and can see which targets they understand well and which they need to improve on. This way, students and parents can track performance thoroughly, rather than just being handed a vague letter grade with no explanation. A score of a "3" means that the student has met the learning standard. A score of a "4" means that the student has met the standard and exceeded expectations. A score of "1" or "2" indicates that the student needs to keep working towards mastery of a given set of learning targets.

Mastery and work habits are separated. Students receive two different grades for each subject; one for mastery of learning targets (achievement) and one for work habits. Scores are determined based on the level of mastery demonstrated, not just by completing work. While your child may have completed work, they may have to revise in order to demonstrate high levels of mastery.

See here for the [WESS grading policy](#)



WESS TERMINOLOGY

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

An *assessment for learning* is an assessment given to students for the purpose of assessing their current progress in mastering a skill or topic.

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

An *assessment of learning* is an assessment given to students for the purpose of assessing whether or not they ultimately mastered a skill or topic.

Case Study

A *case study* is one part of a larger learning expedition (see definition under *expedition* below). During a case study students will undergo a focused investigation of a specific topic or theme related to the learning expedition.

Core Values

WESS has four *core values*: compassion, creativity, resilience, and wonder. These core values live in every classroom and all of the work we do every day at WESS.

Crew

Crew is an integral part of the WESS experience. Your *crew* consists of a small group of students who are your WESS family. Your crew and crew teacher stays the same every year you are at WESS. Crew teachers are the first point of contact for every WESS family, and help advocate for individual student needs.

Expedition

An *expedition* (or learning expedition) is the core structure for learning at WESS. It is an interdisciplinary exploration of a topic or theme across subject areas. An expedition starts with a *kick off* and ends with a *presentation of learning*.

Fieldwork (or Field Experience)

Fieldwork (or *field experiences*) are targeted learning experiences at offsite locations designed to engage students in a hands-on experience directly related to their current expedition.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a platform used by WESS teachers to assign homework and digital classwork. Homework assignments are uploaded to google classroom with their due date and are automatically exported to all students' WESS google calendars. Google classroom is **not** a grading platform.

Guiding Question

A *guiding question* is an open ended overarching question that students explore over the course of a learning expedition or case study.



Habits of Work

Under *Mastery Based Grading* students work habits and academic content and skill mastery are graded separately. WESS uses Habits of Work that support students to become effective learners. We clearly articulate habits at each grade level that enable students to become ethical people, which include traits like respect, responsibility, honesty, and compassion. We believe habits of work are essential for success in school and in life. At WESS homework completion grades live under Habits of Work.

Kick Off

A *kick off* is an immersive learning experience designed to engage students in thinking about the theme, topic, or guiding question of the learning expedition and how the learning expedition will connect across subject areas.

JumpRope

JumpRope is the grading platform used at WESS. Families can access *JumpRope* (updated weekly) to view students' progress toward mastery of learning targets and habits of work.

Learning Targets

Learning Targets are specific goals either for a learning expedition or case study (called a Long Term Learning Target or LTLT) or for daily classwork (called a Supporting Learning Target or SLT). Learning Targets are derived from academic and Common Core standards and are written in student-friendly language (I can...).

Mastery Based Grading

Mastery Based Grading also known as *Standards Based Grading* focuses on student learning. Grades are based on demonstrated understanding of specific *Learning Targets* (LTs). These LTs indicate exactly what students should know and be able to do in each academic content area. Instead of a simple letter, students receive grades in multiple different learning targets and can see which targets they understand well and which they need to improve on. This way, students and parents can track performance thoroughly, rather than just being handed a vague letter grade with no explanation. A score of a "3" means that the student has met the learning standard. A score of a "4" means that the student has met the standard and exceeded expectations. A score of "1" or "2" indicates that the student needs to keep working towards mastery of a given set of learning targets. Mastery and work habits are separated. Students receive two different grades for each subject; one for mastery of learning targets (achievement) and one for work habits. Scores are determined based on the level of mastery demonstrated, not just by completing work. While your child may have completed work, they may have to revise in order to demonstrate high levels of mastery.

Passages

Passages are student led presentations given at the culmination of a significant era of schooling. Passages are an opportunity for students to reflect on their process of learning and present their growth and readiness to move on to the next phase of their learning. At WESS students complete passage presentations at the end of 8th and 12th grade.

Presentation of Learning (PoL)

A *Presentation of Learning (PoL)* is a culminating event or experience at the end of a learning expedition in which students present their learning to an authentic audience. Students may present an *assessments of learning* or they may present an interdisciplinary expedition project that explores the theme or topic of the expedition.



Re-engagement

At WESS, we provide students additional opportunities to master learning targets because we understand that an assignment deadline is not the final opportunity for students to master a content area or skill. We do this through the policy of *re-engagement*. Re-engagement allows students to return to the content area or skill and demonstrate mastery. All students who receive grades below mastery on *assessments of learning* are given the opportunity to re-engage without conditions. Students who receive mastery or above on specific *assessments of learning* (projects and papers) may formally request to re-engage by writing a proposal for re-engagement that integrates the teachers feedback and an action plan.

Student Assessment Notebooks (SANs)

At WESS students preserve their *assessments of learning* and other important pieces of work in their *Student Assessment Notebooks* (SANs). SANs are an integral part of the *student-led conference* and *passages* processes and allow students to reflect on their learning throughout their schooling. At the end of case studies and learning expeditions, students may complete SAN sheets in their classes that ask them to return to their learning targets from the case study or expedition and self-reflect on their own mastery. This allows students to make their learning concrete, and reinforces the value of students' own assessment of their learning.

Student Led Conferences (SLCs)

Student Led Conferences (SLCs) are an opportunity for students to reflect on their progress and process of learning and have a thoughtful discussion around their growth. In Crew, students select work samples and reflect on how this work represents their process of learning. Students are encouraged to select work samples that represent their best effort as well as work samples that reflect areas of growth and opportunity. SLCs take place between the student, their family, and their crew teacher, and take the place of parent teacher conferences.