



**WESTGATE**  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Preschool Student/Parent Handbook

**“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”  
Ecclesiastes 4:12**

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WCS is governed by a board of directors made up of responsible Christians whose function is to set policy for the operation of WCS. The administration of WCS is delegated to the principal who supervises the overall operation of the school. The students, parents, faculty, staff, and board of WCS are answerable to God, the Creator and Ruler of all. Practicing His principles as revealed in the Bible, we will work together to accomplish the common goal of educating the students He has placed in our trust. Westgate Christian School has embraced the service concept of 2M2N. This concept is based on the belief that Godly service requires faculty & staff, parents, and students to go the “second mile” to serve others and that this be “second nature”. (Matthew 5:38-42) This learning, incorporation, and modeling of this service concept are important parts of being a member of the WCS family.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of WCS is to help students love the Lord with all of their mind by educating them in the light of the Gospel.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

WCS endeavors to educate children in the following areas: truth, beauty, and goodness.

### **EXPANDED EXPLANATION OF OUR MISSION AND VISION**

In our mission, we focus on educating the whole person. We believe that the entire person should be educated in the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want to equip our students to go into the world to be a blessing to the world and to be transformative agents in this world. We live in a fallen society that has separated the truth of the creation from its Creator. As a Christian school, we seek to reintegrate all subjects back into their rightful place with Jesus being the central unifying factor.

As Christians, we live in exile in this world dominated by rebellion to God’s good Kingdom rule (1 Peter 2:11). To be an exile, one must be distinct and holy in a foreign culture. An example of what God desires for those living in exile can be found in Jeremiah 29. In Jeremiah 29, God writes to the Jewish exiles that will live in the pagan society of Babylon. God wants His people to be distinct and holy, but at the same time, to work for the good of the city (Jeremiah 29:7). The mission of WCS is to train and equip our students to think truthfully about subject matter, to live faithfully to God’s word, and desire excellence in all they do. We endeavor to do this so that our students will be equipped to go out and be both a blessing to the places they reside as well as be transformative agents for the Gospel wherever they go.

In our vision, we focus on the transcendent areas of truth, beauty, and goodness. We focus on truth because we want our students to excel in math, science, history, grammar, and reading. These areas of study are not fragmented pieces of information, but they are all unified under the truth of the Creator. We focus on the area of beauty because God cares about what is beautiful. Beauty is manifested in the fine arts. We want our students to learn to be creative as our God is creative. We focus on goodness because we realize that our students are not just “brain-boxes”. We believe our students are created in the image of God, and therefore they are moral beings. They have an eternal destiny, and we want our students to spend eternity with God because of what Jesus has done for them.

### **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

“Do nothing out of favoritism” (1 Timothy 5:21)

WCS admits students of any race, color, nationality, religion, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School.

It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, religion, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, account payments, or other School-administered programs.

As a private Christian school, Westgate Christian School reserves the right to deny admission to any student. Further, WCS reserves the right to ask any student to leave at any time for any reason when the administration believes it is in the best interest of the school; this also includes the right to not allow students to return for the next school year.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Westgate Christian School wishes to partner with you as parents to help your student achieve his or her goals. In keeping with this thought, parents agree to support and cooperate with school in this process. Any complaints or negative comments will be shared with staff, administration, or board of directors and NOT through social media. Violation of this expectation can result in removal of the student(s) or denial of re-enrollment.

#### **Conferences**

Due to required planning time, teachers cannot be available for unscheduled meetings, questions, or comments, before or after school. **Scheduled conferences are encouraged between parents and teachers. If you would like to schedule an appointment with your student’s teacher, please email the teacher or call the office to leave a message for the teacher. The teacher will answer your email or return your call and schedule a convenient meeting time. Conferences are held prior to school hours and after school hours. Please provide at least a two (2) day notification to your student’s teacher. Prior planning allows for the teacher to prepare and gather information to address concerns that you have regarding your student’s academic performance. PreK teachers will hold one parent conference during the school year in October. Teachers will contact parents regarding scheduling this conference.**

#### **Divorced Parents**

The Code of Alabama 30-3-154 (2005) states: “Unless otherwise prohibited by court order or statute, all records and information pertaining to the child, including, but not limited to, medical, physiological, dental, scholastic, athletic, extracurricular, and law enforcement, shall be equally available to both parents, in all types of custody arrangements.”

Parents who are divorced must provide legal documents to verify child custody and other child/parent restrictions. Unless there is legal documentation that nullifies the standard custodial/non-custodial order in a divorce situation, WCS will abide by the Code of Alabama as stated above. It is the responsibility of the non-custodial parent to keep WCS fully informed concerning expectations for school information pertaining to their child.

### **Aggressive Parents**

Code of Alabama 1975 Section 16-28-A-1 states the following: “the school system shall provide assistance for seeking the issuance of a warrant or warrants for any person or persons threatening or assaulting an administrator or teacher, and timely assistance with appropriate authorities in the prosecution of any person or persons threatening or assaulting an administrator or teacher.”

Parents that are verbally and/or physically aggressive and/or are overly argumentative with faculty or administration will be asked to withdraw their student immediately from WCS.

### **Student/Parent Complaint and Grievances**

The primary purpose of this procedure is to provide prompt and equitable resolution of student/parent complaints and grievances.

*Level One* – The student/parent should practice the “Matthew 18 Principle”. The resolution of a grievance through free and informal communications as close as possible to the point of origin is encouraged.

*Level Two* – After the student/parent and teacher have met and there is no resolution and both parties have been informed of further resolution procedures, the aggrieved student/parent may consult with the principal.

*Level Three* – In the event the aggrieved student/parent is not satisfied after meeting with the principal, the student/parent may, in writing, bring the matter to the Board of Directors. Once a written, signed, and dated grievance is received, a hearing date will be set with the Board. The Board’s decision will be written and considered final in the grievance process.

### **Returning Student Registration**

Each student’s record will be reviewed at the end of each academic year to determine whether the student is eligible to return to WCS. The records used are those which have been available to formal correspondence with the parents concerning academic or disciplinary matters. Parents will be notified by conference and follow-up letter if the decision has been made that their student is not eligible to return to WCS.

### **Check In/Check Out Procedures**

Students are encouraged to remain at school the entire length of the school day. Doctor, dental, and other appointments should be arranged after school hours whenever possible. In the event a student must be checked in or out, a parent or guardian must accompany the student in and sign him or her in or out at the reception desk.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

By enrolling at WCS, students and parents/guardians are agreeing to adhere to a Code of Conduct. Parents must understand that their family becomes part of the WCS family and represents that family by their actions both on and off campus. Parents should strive to set a Christian example at all times and assist children to follow the example of Christ in their daily lives.

Parents are to be examples of good conduct and courtesy. Parents are to treat each other, the faculty, and staff with respect and courtesy, including the respect of time, appointments, and school procedures. This includes respecting the instructional hours by not remaining on campus unless you are volunteering for specific events.

As a student at Westgate Christian School, each student is expected to be a moral, law abiding citizen, and represent the school and the name of Jesus at all times; therefore, student behavior on or off campus (during school and non-school hours) that is illicit, immoral, illegal, or in any manner reflects adversely on WCS can cause immediate expulsion.

Westgate Christian School believes that it is necessary to publish what is expected in key areas so that everyone understands expected behavior. While it is not reasonable to attempt to list all behaviors that may be unacceptable, the following paragraphs will outline major areas of conduct. A detailed disciplinary policy outlining consequences for unacceptable behavior is outlined in the Behavior and Discipline section of this handbook.

Those students who choose to attend WCS will accept all standards, regulations, and requirements. WCS feels strongly about helping each student become a more responsible Christian leader, one who understands the sincere need for respect for authority, property, government, peers, and self. WCS will work to strengthen every student in these areas. Students must understand that although they have freedom of choice, they do not have freedom from the consequences of their actions.

Guiding Biblical principles at WCS:

Matthew 7:12 "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate one to another."

Philippians 1:27 "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ."

1. Responsibility to Others

*"Honor all men" (1 Peter 2:17)*

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner at all times, always giving consideration to others first. Both on and off WCS grounds, students are to maintain the highest standards of respect for teachers, faculty, staff, parents, other adults, and fellow students.

2. Responsibility for Property

Students are expected to act responsibly regarding property, whether it is property of WCS, others, or their own. Any behavior which may damage or deface property is forbidden and will be dealt with accordingly. Parents may be held financially responsible for the loss or damage to WCS property.

3. Lying, Cheating, and Stealing

*"Do not steal, deal falsely, or lie to one another" (Leviticus 19:11)*

Students shall not lie, cheat, or steal, nor shall they tolerate such conduct in any other student.

4. Fighting, Rough Play, and Harassment

Physical contact and harassment at WCS is strictly forbidden. Any student participating in physical contact and/or harassment on school grounds will receive prompt disciplinary action, including corporal punishment, suspension, or expulsion. Students are to report harassment and fights immediately. Any student failing to report harassment or physical contact shall likewise be disciplined. Serious injuries may occur even in moments of "horseplay", when students are "kidding" or "playing around".

Any action which jeopardizes the safety of another student, whether deliberate or not, will receive immediate attention and disciplinary action.

5. Profanity, Obscenity, and Vulgar Language or Conduct

*“Do not any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths” (Ephesians 4:29)*

Students must speak and act in keeping with Christian standards, and must not interfere with the educational process. Profane, obscene and vulgar language, gestures, conduct and material are strictly prohibited.

6. Food and Drink

Except as otherwise provided herein, food and drink will only be consumed in designated areas during lunch and/or snack time.

7. WCS Functions

Students attending school functions, both on and off campus, shall be governed by school rules and regulations, and shall be subject to the authority of school personnel.

8. Student Attitudes

*“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5)*

A student’s attitude either strengthens or hinders the educational process. Students are expected to display an attitude that will create a stronger environment for learning and development. Students displaying an inappropriate attitude will be disciplined accordingly.

9. Student Efforts

*“And whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” (Colossians 3:23)*

Students are expected to exert their best effort in all areas of activities. WCS teachers often make assignments which require students to invest out-of –school time to complete. Students must complete and turn in these assignments in a timely manner. Failure to do so will affect the student’s academic standing and may result in disciplinary action.

10. Public Displays of Affection

“No contact.” Students are prohibited from all public displays of affection such as kissing, hand holding, arms around the waist or shoulders, etc., at school, on school grounds, and/or WCS events.

## **BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

*“Do not withhold discipline from a child” (Proverbs 23:13)*

*“Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring delight to your soul.” (Proverbs 29:17)*

*“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”(Hebrews 12:11)*

Although WCS has no power to force thoughts or beliefs upon students, it must be able to control students’ behavior. The faculty and administration of WCS have the responsibility and authority to correct students’ inappropriate behavior in order to maintain a quality-learning environment. At WCS, discipline is designed to achieve appropriate behavior while teaching students character and self-discipline.

Students at WCS are expected to conduct themselves in the appropriate manner whether at school or any school related event. There will be zero tolerance for the use of any medium (including, but not limited to, video, social networks, email, blogs, etc.) used to publicly place

WCS and/or any of the stakeholders in a negative light. Students are responsible for their compliance with standards and for the consequences of their misconduct.

In order to prepare students for elementary school, WCS must establish and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The establishment of such an atmosphere rests upon each student's readiness to assume responsibility for his or her own actions and to meet the demands of a productive educational environment.

In PreK, the classroom teacher will handle routine disciplinary matters, and parents will receive timely communication concerning classroom behavior. Teachers will provide parents with a detailed classroom management description for their classroom at orientation. If an office referral is considered appropriate, parents will be notified that the referral has occurred and of the action that was taken. An office referral will result in one or more of the following actions being taken: conference with the student, conference with the student and parents, behavioral warning, corporal punishment, suspension or release from the PreK program.

### **POTTY TRAINING**

At WCS, we define successful independent toileting as having the ability to lower his/her underpants (as well as deal with other clothing), completing the act of urinating and/or defecating in the toilet, wiping themselves, flushing and re-dressing themselves. **Children in ALL 3K AND 4K classes are expected to be able to completely potty independently** (as described above). This policy is in place because these classrooms are operated in true preschool classroom settings. The PreK classrooms are not equipped with a diaper changing table/station or diapering supplies. If a child has three or more accidents within a three week timeframe, a probationary warning will be issued. If another accident occurs during the probationary period, the child will be required to stay home until securely potty trained. The child's place will be held for the remainder of the month.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE**

Personal electronic devices such as cell phones, smart watches, iPods, and game systems are not authorized for students during school hours. Teachers may waive this policy with administration's permission for specific school activities. **WESTGATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL NOR ITS EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICES THAT ARE DAMAGED, LOST, OR STOLEN.**

### **OFF CAMPUS ASSESSMENTS**

Mandatory Off-Campus Assessment may be required when determined by the principal. When off-campus counselor assessment is determined as a necessary step following a principal referral, parents will provide documentation of the assessment completed by a qualified mental health professional to the principal within the time frame designated. Failure to comply with counseling assessment requirements will result in release from PreK.



### **DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM**

Dismissal is the removal of a student when it is determined by the staff that the school cannot safely and adequately serve the needs of the student and the family. This is normally required when repeated behavioral issues that affect the safety of the student, other students, or staff members have occurred. Dismissed students may exhibit a lack of maturity that affects their success and/or the class as a whole. Dismissed students may be readmitted to WCS in future years when issues causing dismissal have subsided. WCS reserves the right to ask any student to leave at any time for any reason when the administration believes it is in the best interest of the school. Parents will be notified of a dismissal determination in writing to include the process for appeal to the Board of Directors.

**Dismissal can also occur when a student's account falls in arrears without communication of hardship with the business office. In such cases, parents will be given a date to bring the account current. Should the account not be brought current by the deadline, the student will be dismissed at the end of the month.**

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Parents wishing to withdraw their child from the preschool program must inform the office in writing 2 (two) weeks before the child's last day. In the event a notice is not given, parents will be charged for the following two weeks.

Transcripts and/or student records will not be forwarded to any school until all accounts are settled and WCS receives a written request from the parent/guardian or receiving school. Several procedures must occur prior to a student's withdrawal from WCS:

1. A withdrawal clearance form stating the date and reason for the withdrawal must be completed.
2. All WCS property must be returned. WCS property includes, but is not limited to, computer equipment, textbooks, lockers, lock, and library books.
3. In the case of early withdrawal, including before the start of school, all fees and the current month's tuition must be paid in full.
4. Exit survey and possible interview with the principal.

## **BULLYING**

At Westgate Christian School, students are taught to be Christ-like in their actions toward others. This key Christian tenant is reinforced in Bible class, Chapel, and in the day-to-day classroom. The faculty and staff are available to help students that have had their feelings hurt by another student or experienced a single incident that requires investigation and action.

Bullying is never tolerated at WCS. We define bullying as the repeated act of intimidating a person either to make them do something or make them feel a certain way. The intent is to create an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim. It is an intentional act that causes harm to others, and may involve verbal harassment, verbal or non-verbal threats, physical assault, stalking, cyber bullying, or other methods of coercion such as manipulation, blackmail, or extortion. It is intended to hurt, threaten, or frighten another person.

Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic information and communication devices to willfully harm either a person or persons through any electronic medium, such as text, audio, photos, or videos. Examples of this behavior include but are not limited to:

- Sending/posting false, cruel, hurtful, or vicious messages/comments
- Creating or contributing to websites that have stories, cartoons, pictures, and jokes ridiculing others
- Breaking into an email account and sending vicious or embarrassing materials to others
- Engaging someone in electronic communication, tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information and forwarding that information to others
- Posting of a student's picture without their permission

In order for WCS administration to take timely and appropriate action, parents and students must report the specific repeated bullying incidents as soon as possible after they occur. The principal will keep reporting parents informed of the results of the investigation.

WCS will not tolerate the use of social media to bully or ridicule a member of the faculty, board, or staff. These actions undermine the partnership that must be created in order to accomplish our educational purposes.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

While all forms of teasing, ridicule, humiliation, bullying, and belittlement are strongly discouraged and are improper for those who want to model the example of Christ; sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by one student to any other person. Conduct that is perceived by another as sexual harassment, whether or not the action was intended as such, may be considered sexual harassment and will be dealt with as such. Any conduct, which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with another pupil's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment will be considered harassment. A complaint or report submitted in good faith will not affect the complainant's future grades or educational opportunity. False claims will be considered a violation of this policy. A person who feels they have been a victim of sexual harassment is encouraged to take one or more of the following actions:

- Communicate directly with the offender and make them aware that the behavior is unwelcome, offensive, and inappropriate.
- Bring the situation to the attention of a(the):
  - Parent
  - Staff member
  - Principal

A report will result in a formal investigation of the incident. In determining what action will be taken when sexual harassment occurs, WCS will consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the advances, the relationships between the parties involved, the ages of the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

## **DRESS CODES**

### **Requirements**

- Students may wear shirts, blouses, t-shirts, or sweatshirts that do not contain or depict offensive communications or advertisements.
- No halter tops or spaghetti straps.
- Shorts shall be worn under all skirts and dresses.
- No flip flops. Sandals may be worn provided they have a heel strap.
- No shoes with wheels
- Athletic shoes should be double knotted upon arrival.

### **Backpacks/Tote Bags**

Students in PreK will need a backpack. Oversized backpacks and backpacks with wheels are not allowed.

### **SPIRITUAL PROGRAM**

WCS is committed to Biblical principles and seeks to articulate those principles in ways that instill an active faith in God and a desire to imitate the character of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture within each student. Every part of the students' school day will reflect the purposeful discipline that is necessary for Christ-likeness.

Daily Bible instruction is a part of each student's course of study in PreK. Students will also attend chapel as scheduled to reinforce Biblical principles and provide life lessons for success. Chapel leaders will work closely with the student focus groups to ensure that chapel meets the needs of the student body.

Christian education is an approach that carries with it a Christian worldview. Faculty and staff integrate faith in God and the example of Christ throughout the curriculum. WCS aspires to be non-sectarian in character, seeking always to be Christ-like, guided in relationships by gentleness and respect. Therefore, WCS welcomes all students of character and ability who share Christian values.

Throughout its existence, WCS has worked hard to create a friendly and inclusive environment for students from a variety of religious, ethnic, social, cultural, and geographic backgrounds. WCS feels a great responsibility to use the God-given gift and knowledge of all students, faculty, staff, and alumni as each one seeks to show Christ to the world.

WCS promotes lifelong learning and service. WCS will lend support to the growth, stability, and spiritual health of the body of Christ on earth as Christian servants/leaders are trained to honor God and serve Christ in their communities, the nation, and the world. It is not our mission to introduce, propagate, or argue current religious issues of the day. It is not our mission to offend or judge anyone with regard to conviction and practices. It is our mission to nurture spiritual growth in each of our students, their families, and ourselves.

## ACADEMICS

### Promotions

There are three important factors that are involved in student promotion: (1) academic progress, (2) the ability of the child to handle the class work habits/expectations, and (3) the maturity level of the child.

Some children may be able to complete grade level work or slightly below grade level work and not be prepared for the next school year at WCS due to its challenging expectations. WCS reserves the right to retain a student in such circumstances even though he or she may not be making failing grades. Some children may make satisfactory academic progress, but their maturity level may not be commensurate with that of their peers. As a result, they may need to repeat a grade. If such a case occurs, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing.

### PreK:

1. Reading Readiness
2. Maturity or birth date
3. Attendance

Students who fail to meet the criteria listed above will be considered for retention in their current grade. If retention for any reason is recommended, parents/guardians will be notified in person. If a student is retained, he/she will not be placed with the same teacher the following year.

### Progress Reports

PreK progress reports will be provided to the parents four times per academic school year.

### Programs

In December, WCS will hold a Christmas program.

In the spring of each year, WCS will hold an end of the year program.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media provides opportunities for Westgate Christian School administration to share information and knowledge with key stakeholders. It also provides a platform by which to engage in conversations, respond to feedback directly, and maintain an active dialogue with parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends of WCS.

At this time, Westgate Christian School has official school accounts with Facebook and Instagram. Administration manages all accounts and is responsible for platform and content management. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to create a social media account that is branded Westgate Christian School, WCS, or any combination of the school's name, logo, and/or mascots that would give the audience any reason to believe the account is an official school account. Anyone interested in creating a WCS account, including those with a particular interest in a program, club, or activity must contact the Principal prior to doing so for approval.

For any questions or concerns regarding Westgate Christian School's social media policy, please contact WCS's Principal.

## WCS ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

PreK students will participate in recess daily as well as art and music classes as scheduled.

Before-school care will be available beginning at 7:00 a.m. for those students who must be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. Any PreK students arriving before 7:45 a.m. must be dropped off at WCS before-school care.

After-school care will be provided for all PreK students not picked up by 11:15 a.m. to ensure student safety and supervision.

**Late pickup after 11:15 am for school or 5:30 pm for daycare will result in a \$1/minute charge for the first 4 minutes. For 5 – 9 minutes late pickup, you will be charged \$5 per minute. For 10 or more minutes late, the charge will be \$10 per minute.** Daycare staff is paid to work until 5:30. They have families and responsibilities, too. Continued misuse of late pick-up from daycare may result in your child being disenrolled from daycare.

## SCHOOL/OFFICE HOURS

### School Hours of Operation

WCS is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

PreK (2's - 4's) begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m.

## SICKNESS

Parents will be contacted to get any student exhibiting symptoms of an illness.

Children must NOT be brought to WCS if they have the following:

- Severe colds (this includes croup, RSV, influenza, or other respiratory illness)
- Undetermined rash or spots with or without fever or behavior changes, until a physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.
- Skin infections (boils, ringworm, impetigo, etc.) until 24 hours after treatment has begun. Lesions on exposed skin must be covered with a watertight dressing.
- Head lice (after head lice treatment, a note from the doctor will be required before returning to daycare.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea within 24 hours. Special circumstances that require specific exclusion criteria be met before returning to WCS include the following:
  - Toxin-producing E.coli or Shigella infection, until diarrhea resolves and the test results of 2 stool cultures are negative for these organisms.
  - Salmonella serotype Typhi infection, until diarrhea resolves. In children younger than 5 years with *Salmonella* serotype Typhi, 3 negative stool cultures are required.
- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Mouth sores, unless the child's physician or local health department states that the child is noninfectious.
- Streptococcal pharyngitis (i.e., strep throat or other streptococcal infection), until 24 hours after treatment has begun.

- Staphylococcus aureus skin infections, only if the skin lesions are covered with a watertight dressing.
- Symptoms of childhood diseases (chicken pox, mumps, measles, scarlet fever, etc.)
- Eye infections (pink eye or other infections)
- Fever (100 and above) within the past 24 hours. Exceptions made per doctor;s written instructions.
- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in everyday activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than what the staff can provide.
- The child appears to be ill. Symptoms include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or having a spreading rash.
- If your child becomes ill while at WCS, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately.
- Parents should report to the staff any illnesses or exposures to communicable diseases outside of WCS.

### **Returning to School After Sickness**

**IF YOUR STUDENT HAS A FEVER, THEY MUST REMAIN HOME UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT MEDICATION. IF YOUR STUDENT VOMITS OR HAS DIARRHEA, THEY MUST REMAIN HOME WITHOUT VOMITING OR DIARRHEA FOR 24 HOURS.** These policies are strictly enforced and are based on Centers for Disease Control recommendations.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE SICKNESS POLICY COULD RESULT IN YOUR CHILD’S DISMISSAL FROM WCS.**

### **Immunizations**

“The board of education and the governing authority of each private school shall require each pupil, prior to entering kindergarten or first grade or prior to re-entering the higher grades of the schools of Alabama, to present a Certificate of Immunization for the prevention of diseases listed in 420-6-1-03 (Code of Alabama. 1975, 16-30-4). The Certificate of Immunization will be on a form approved by the Alabama Department of Public Health.” Rules of the State Board of Health Chapter 420-6-1

Westgate Christian School requires that this Certificate of Immunization be presented before the first day of attendance. These certificates may be obtained from your physician or local Health Department. Administration will check immunization records periodically, and parents will be notified if any student is found to have an expired immunization record. In the case of an expired immunization record, parents will have thirty (30) days to return a current immunization record.

### **Medical Conditions**

Parents are encouraged to discuss any health issues or medical conditions related to their child with the WCS administration. Our plan is to have an Individual Health Plan (that includes an Emergency Plan) on file for any student that has a medical condition that could affect their school success.

Please see the school administration promptly regarding any student that requires emergency medication, i.e., an EpiPen or EpiPen Jr. Proper paperwork will need to be completed to allow students to carry an EpiPen at school. We advise that an EpiPen be kept in the Principal's office during the school year.

### **Medications**

It is the policy of WCS that students not possess medication while on school grounds, with the exception of self-administered asthma medication. All medication, with the exception of approved asthma medications, must be delivered to the school by the parent or guardian. The medication will be stored in the First Aid Room. As a protection to the student, the student WILL NOT be allowed to transport medications to and from the school.

**PARENTS MUST FILL OUT A MEDICATION/MEDICAL PROCEDURE FORM FOR ANY AND ALL MEDICATIONS WHETHER PRESCRIPTION OR OTC TO BE ADMINISTERED AT SCHOOL.**

### **Prescription Medications**

In order for prescription medications to be given at school, an authorization form must be completed by the prescriber and the parent. The authorization will be valid for the current school year only. The prescription medication must be delivered in a pharmacy labeled container which includes the student's name, prescriber's name, name of medication, strength, dosage, time interval, route, and date of medication discontinuation when applicable. Most pharmacies are happy to provide parents with duplicate prescription containers for school use. Changes in medication or medication dosage will require a new authorization form to be completed. A written doctor's order will be required if the dosage changes from the dosage directions printed on the prescription bottles. For example, if the bottle reads "1 tablet at lunch", the administration will not be allowed to administer 1 ½ tablets without written authorization from the physician.

The first dose of new medications MUST be given at home, with the exception of emergency medications; e.g. EpiPen injections.

Parents are responsible for picking up any remaining medications at the end of the school year or when medicine has been discontinued. Prescription medications left at the school will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Parents are to notify school administration if, for any reason, the student has been prescribed a narcotic medication that will be taken before school that could alter the student's ability to learn and/or concentrate on school work.



### **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications**

The school stocks Children's Motrin and Tylenol, antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes and Benadryl cream for itching due to insect bites. Any other OTC medications must be brought in by a parent/guardian to be administered to students.

### **Skin Infections**

Any student identified with a skin infection must be seen and treated by a physician as soon as the infection is noted. Parents who notice a skin infection must seek physician assistance and present a copy of the doctor's findings to school administration. If a student is observed with a skin infection at school, staff members will check with the nurse to assure that medical action has been taken as required. Unless directed by a physician, students with skin infections will not be excluded from attending school.

Exclusion from physical activities will be reserved for those with infections that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage.

## **SECURITY/VISITOR PROCEDURES**

Westgate Christian School is under constant video surveillance 24 hours per day using a network of outside and inside cameras.

WCS classrooms, gymnasium, hallways, cafeteria, and playgrounds are subject to closed circuit video surveillance at any and all times. Any footage captured on video is for administrative use and not for parent observation.

All external doors are locked at all times. Visitors can only access the building by requesting entry from the front desk through the front far right door. Once entry is granted, all visitors will sign in and receive a visitor's pass. All visitors are required to sign in and sign out at the reception desk.

Parents/grandparents are welcome at WCS at any time.\* All meetings with administration or teachers must be scheduled in advance.

Parents will not attempt to meet with teachers before or after school without an appointment as it disrupts their daily schedule and affects classroom quality. Additionally, parent will not use classroom visits as a time to meet with teachers as it also disrupts their daily schedule and affects classroom quality.

**NO ONE SHALL VIDEO (TO INCLUDE FACETIME) OR PHOTOGRAPH ANYONE AT WESTGATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE PRINCIPAL.** Failure to observe this policy could result in your child's dismissal from the program.

\*Should frequency of visitation become a classroom concern, teachers reserve the right to limit visits.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **School Closing**

In the event of school closing for any reason, WCS will contact local television and radio stations to announce closings. In addition, WCS will send out text messages, however, parents/guardians must be signed up for this feature. Updates may also be listed on WCS's social media accounts. We follow Dothan City School's closings.

**In the event of extended closing, refunds and credits will not be available.**

### **Fire and Weather Drills/Emergencies**

There will be both announced and unannounced fire, tornado, and emergency shutdown drills during the year. Instructions for evacuating the building, including the location to which teachers and students should go, are posted in each classroom. During these drills (or in the event of an actual emergency), students must keep in line, stay together, walk (no running), and remain silent. Students are to remain with their classes throughout the drill.

### **Weather Watches/Warnings**

In the event a weather watch is issued, the administration will closely monitor its location and will take action accordingly. If a weather watch is in effect at the end of the regular school day, school will dismiss as usual.

In the event a weather warning is issued, the administration will take action immediately following the school action plan. Under a tornado warning, students will not be released via regular transportation plans provided the warning is in effect at the time set for normal school activities, EXCEPT that students may be released to the student's parent/guardian, provided said parent/guardian comes to the school to assume custody for his/her child.

### **School Lockdown**

In the case of any danger outside or inside the school, or when notified by law enforcement agencies, a school-wide lockdown may be required. All staff members have been trained on detailed procedures that ensure the safety and security of all students during a lockdown. Once the building is locked down, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the school building for any reason until the all clear is given.

Student records are to be treated confidentially and should contain information that is accurate, relevant, and appropriate. The following applies to viewing these records: (Public Law 107-110)

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to inspect and review records, files, and data directly relating to their children, including permanent record folders. A request to review such records must be made in writing to the Principal.
- Upon review of such records, the parent/guardian, or eligible age student may request a hearing to challenge the contents of such records if desired.
- No personally identifiable information regarding students will be released without the consent of parent/guardian or eligible age student except to the following:
  - School personnel involved in the educational process
  - Other schools in which the student enrolls, or intends to enroll
  - Or authorized administrative head of an education agency
- Transcripts of permanent records will be sent to other schools in which a student enrolls or intends to enroll when requested by school officials or when requested by the parent/guardian or eligible age student.
- WCS will not release grades, standardized test scores, or report cards until the account is paid in full.

**\*\*All other requests for student records to be released must be accompanied by written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible age student.**

### FUNDRAISING

All fundraisers must be approved by WCS administration and listed in advance on the calendar regardless of the person or organization conducting them.

### LUNCH AND SNACK PROGRAM

**Children should not be eating or drinking once they have exited the vehicle.**

Candy should not be sent for lunch. If your child has candy in his/her lunchbox, it will not be offered to your child but sent home instead.

Parents may choose to order a lunch for their child or pack their child's lunch. If ordering, parents will order lunches on FACTS by Thursday the previous week. If packing lunches, parents should pack lunches for students that require a minimum unpacking time. **Anything that requires heating over two (2) minutes should be prepared at home.** Lunchroom staff will reheat it in the bowl provided by the parent/guardian.

**Please do not send drinks with red dye, caffeine, or carbonation.**

In the event a student comes to school without a lunch and one has not been ordered, a sandwich, chips, and a drink will be provided and the child's account will be charged.

## **SCHOOL TRAFFIC**

Parents may park in the parking lot in front of the school. If a parent is coming to check out or pick up a child, he/she may pull under the portico.

**Children must not be permitted to run in the front of the building, this includes any grassy areas, parking lot, or drive through.**

### **Before-School Care Drop Off**

Before-school care will be available beginning at 7:00 a.m. for those students who must be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. Enter the second parking lot closest to Westgate Church of Christ office and drive all the way through the parking lot to exit the same access. A staff member will be available to help children out of vehicles and into the building. Parents needing to exit their car during drop off will need to park in a parking place and not block the drive through.

### **PreK Pickup**

All parents are requested to pick up students in their car by waiting in the car pick up lane in the front of the school. Parents needing to exit their car during pick up must park their car in a parking space.

Parents that must walk up to the building to pick up their students will not enter the building unless absolutely necessary. They must show the WCS provided name sheet for their student(s) to the car call staff. PreK students may not walk to the parking lot unless escorted by parents.

Each car will have the WCS provided name sheet for their student(s), clearly visible on the passenger side of the dashboard. Students will be called individually out of their classrooms, exit the school through the front entrance, and will be loaded into cars under the direct supervision of assigned staff members. Students are not allowed to meet their ride in any other place. These policies are in place for everyone's safety.

Carpooling parents must have the WCS provided name sheet for all the students they are picking up. If a PreK student has parental permission to ride with a grade school student, the grade school student may pick up the student from after school care. PreK students are not authorized to wait outside the building for the ride. If they are not called, they must proceed to after-school care. At 11:15 a.m., or when the car pick-up service is completed, ALL PreK students who are remaining will be taken to after-school care. Parents picking up their students(s) from after-school care must park and come inside the building to pick them up.

### **Motorized Vehicles**

The speed limit on campus is 10 mph and will be strictly enforced. Cell phone use by vehicles in motion is prohibited. Reckless driving WILL NOT be tolerated.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

All personal items must be marked. Items found on campus should be turned in to the office. On the first school day of the month, all items in lost and found will be given to charitable organizations.

## **GENERAL POLICIES GOVERNING STUDENT EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

### **Parties**

Teachers and room parents may at various times during the year schedule parties. It is acceptable and appropriate for room parents to plan parties in collaboration with classroom teachers to celebrate holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, 100th Day, End-of-School, etc.

### **Birthday Parties**

Birthday parties will not be part of the school day.

### **Gifts During School Hours**

WCS requests that special treats, gifts, or surprises (e.g. balloons, flowers, etc.) for students not be sent to the school campus. If gifts or surprises are delivered to WCS, they will remain in the office until the end of the school day. The student is responsible for picking up the item(s) at the end of the school day.

### **Invitations**

Invitations to parties outside of school may be given out at school with the permission of the teacher and only if the entire class is invited or all of one gender. WCS is not responsible for any non-sanctioned activities of any type.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips form an important part of the learning process for students at WCS. A field trip release form will be provided for each field trip to be taken during the school year. This form must be signed and returned before a student will be permitted to participate in any field trip. "Phone permission" is not acceptable. In some cases, a field trip may be a required assignment for a class grade. Those students not participating may be required to complete an alternate assignment. Parent participation in transportation and chaperoning field trips is necessary and greatly appreciated.

Parents are not allowed to veer from the teacher-designated agenda for the field trip as parents are given specific permission for their students to go to specific places. Taking students places not specified by the teacher places the school in a liability situation.

A "field trip chaperone agreement" (available in the front office) must be signed by each chaperone participating in any field trip. A copy of your current driver's license and proof of insurance are also needed in order to drive on the field trip.

Once a student is signed up for a field trip and payment is made as required, no refunds will be given. Students are required to dress in dress code when on field trips. Funds will not be collected using the WCS name, and meetings will not be held at school for any trips planned by students that are not sanctioned by WCS. Student trips will normally be no longer than one day and will be organized with an adequate number of adult chaperones to ensure management of students at all times.

### **Videos**

Educational videos are often used to enhance and support curriculum. These videos must be reviewed in advance by the teacher and deemed appropriate for the class. Occasionally, videos are used for reward, motivation, etc, and are simply for entertainment purposes. Again, these videos must be reviewed by the teacher and must be appropriate for the class. Only G-rated videos will be used in PreK.

### **Animals**

Pets (including dogs and other animals) may not be brought to school except when prearranged with the principal for a specific educational purpose. Animals are not allowed at school functions on or off campus.

## **TUITION AND FEE PAYMENTS**

Tuition and fees are assessed through FACTS.

**Tuition and daycare fees will not be waived in the event WCS closes due to pandemic, weather, or any other closure advised by authorities.**

**Late pickup after 11:15 am for school or 5:30 pm for daycare will result in a \$1/minute charge for the first 4 minutes. For 5 – 9 minutes late pickup, you will be charged \$5 per minute. For 10 or more minutes late, the charge will be \$10 per minute.** Daycare staff is paid to work until 5:30. They have families and responsibilities, too. Continued misuse of late pick-up from daycare may result in your child being disenrolled from daycare.

### **ANNUAL RE-ENROLLMENT**

Each February, current WCS students have the first opportunity to enroll for the following school year before registration is opened to the public in March . The registration packet and registration fee are required to ensure your child's placement.

**WESTGATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW AND REVISE THESE POLICIES AT ANYTIME. WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES WILL BE GIVEN TO PARENTS.**

I have read the policies and procedures included in this handbook and agree to abide by the rules stated within. I understand that failure to comply with these rules could result in my child's dismissal from WCS. I also understand that these rules are subject to change, and I will be notified of any changes.

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date