

PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-25



September 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians of Westhaven Students:

WELCOME BACK!

If you're new to Westhaven School - ***WELCOME TO THE WOLF PACK***

The start of a new school year is always an exciting time full of promises of new adventures, learning and growth for our students. Our educators are geared up and ready to go. They've spent the first day of school getting to know the children, helping students get to know each other and teaching them school routines and expectations.

I am sending this letter to let you know a few things that will be important for you as we move through the 2024/25 school year. Please refer back to this information when you have questions about various topics regarding our procedures and policies.

OUR VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

At École Westhaven School, our vision is that all students will read at or above grade level before they leave our school at the end of grade five. This doesn't mean we don't help students excel in all the other academic areas, but we firmly believe that having a solid foundation in reading will help our students succeed in all subjects.

Our vision is that 100% of students will read at or above grade level because we want students to be confident in their abilities to meet any challenges that come their way.

Be Kind, Take Chances, Make Mistakes, Learn from Mistakes, Let's Get Messy!

COMMUNICATIONS

- All families will receive a GYPSD Calendar.
- Website - Most of the information you'll need can be found on our website at <https://westhavenschool.gypsd.ca/>. Upcoming whole-school events are on the front page, and if you click on the *Important School Dates* tab, you can download or print a monthly calendar. We do our very best to keep this information as up-to-date as possible.
- Phone calls home - You'll receive a quick, pre-recorded phone message from me every Sunday night (Mondays for long weekends), letting you know what's coming up in the week ahead. Please keep your phone number up-to-date with the office so you receive these messages.
- Emails home - We try to reduce our paper usage and utilize technology for most communication, so future letters from me and the school division will come

through your email. Please keep your email up-to-date with the office and check your spam or junk inbox if you missed a notice.

- Facebook - We use our main Facebook page (Westhaven Elementary School) to post photos celebrating the school's fantastic learning activities and special events. Our Montessori and Junior Kindergarten classes also have specific Facebook pages.
- Agendas - We want to teach our students ways to remind themselves (and parents) about homework and upcoming events, so our grade 1-5 students each have a home/school agenda. Each teacher will give you more details about how they use agendas in their classroom.
- Other - individual teachers will provide you with extra information you'll need to know, such as newsletters, the Remind App or the Class Dojo App.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Students flourish when parents are involved at school, and we work together to support each other. If you are interested in volunteering, please ask your child's teacher to send home a Volunteer Package for you to complete. I would encourage you to become involved by attending School Council meetings held on the first Monday of the month in the library.

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK OR INJURED AT SCHOOL

We'll call you if your child is sick or injured at school and needs to be picked up. The child will be supervised in the office until the parents are contacted. If we can't reach a child's parent, we may need to contact the emergency contact. **It is essential to keep your phone number(s) and emergency contact information up-to-date with the office.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and arriving at school on time in the morning are two main ways to help your child be successful and have a positive attitude toward school. We will monitor attendance and contact parents if your child misses a lot of school so we can work out an improvement plan with you.

If your child will be absent, the school must be notified as soon as possible. Call the office at 780-723-3397 between 7:45 and 8:30 a.m. or email us at wh@gypsd.ca. We have a "Safe Arrival" program at Westhaven. If a student is absent at 8:45 and we haven't heard from you, we will call home to verify the reason for the absence.

Late students must enter through the front door of the building and be received by a staff member. If you are picking your child up early from school, please come to the front door to pick them up.

IF PROBLEMS ARISE

We are committed to maintaining a positive relationship with parents. See the attached GYPSD procedure for addressing concerns regarding your child's education.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

If our school population needs to evacuate the building due to unforeseen circumstances, the children will be taken to the Vanier Community Catholic School gymnasium at 831-56 Street. Regular dismissal times will be followed, and bussed students will be picked up from Vanier. Every effort will be made to contact parents or guardians by telephone. Should this occur, please remain calm and patient as we contact everyone.

TELEPHONE USE/CELL PHONES

Telephones in the classrooms are for emergency use only. We ask that after-school play times and sleepovers be arranged at home because interruptions due to telephone calls to the classroom result in decreased learning time for students. Student cell phones are not used during school time. If you feel your child requires a cell phone to contact you after school, please be aware that it is at your own risk and that the phone will be put away during school hours.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

Playground supervision begins at 8:05 a.m. for our **bus** students. We have an extra supervisor on the back playground beginning at 8:15 a.m. for in-town students. School starts at 8:30 a.m. Dismissal is at 3:12 p.m. Bus arrivals and departures are supervised. Contact the office or your child's teacher if your child is a bus student and not riding for a specific day. Students walking home from school or being picked up must leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal. Students are not allowed to play on the playgrounds after school.

We have two marked crosswalks at the school. Please teach your child(ren) to only cross safely at the marked crosswalks. Drivers, be extra cautious when driving in front of the school along Westhaven Drive.

DO NOT drive into the bus lane before school (7:45 to 8:45 a.m.) or after school (3:00 to 4:00 p.m.)

ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL

Student safety is of utmost importance to us. We are a closed campus, meaning all exterior doors remain locked during the day. If you need to enter the school, please ring the doorbell to the right of the front door, and a staff member will let you in. All school visitors must sign in and receive a Visitor Tag from the office.

Thanks again for choosing Westhaven School for your child! Please feel free to contact me if you need more information. I look forward to working closely together to make this year fantastic!

LET'S GET MESSY!
Ms. Debra Boos
Principal

