
WEST TOWSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Jason Barnett

Principal

Christopher Carter

Assistant Principal



Dear West Towson Elementary School Families,

We hope you find this handbook helpful. It was designed to provide information to assist you and your child(ren) as members of the West Towson Elementary School community. It provides important information about school procedures as well as answers to frequently asked questions raised by parents and students.

We are available to answer additional questions or clarify issues that may arise during the school year. Please contact individual teachers regarding specific classroom issues or procedures. The West Towson Elementary School (<https://westtowsones.bcps.org/>) and WTES PTA (<https://www.runpto.com/u/wtes>) websites provide contact information for staff members and additional information about our school.

We, the faculty and staff at West Towson Elementary School, encourage your active involvement as partners in your children's education. Strong connections between parents, teachers, and students support all students' success at our school. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of West Towson Elementary School

Vision

West Towson Elementary School learners will be responsible, confident, and thoughtful leaders who are collaborative and independent problem-solvers in an ever-changing global society.

Mission

The West Towson community will collaborate to empower and inspire all students to reach their greatest potential. Through a safe, authentic, and engaging learning environment, West Towson learners will become insightful, compassionate leaders, equipped to make a positive impact in our world.

West Towson Elementary School Family Handbook

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SCHOOL HOURS

8:30 a.m.	School Office Opens
9:05 a.m.	Doors Open for Students
9:20 a.m.	Late Bell Rings & Morning Announcements Begin
4:00 p.m.	Afternoon Announcements Followed by Dismissal
4:30 p.m.	School Office Closes

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

West Towson Elementary School

6914 North Charles Street

Towson, MD 21204

[443] 809-3869

[443] 809-8036 (fax)

[443] 809-8037 (School Nurse)

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

Bus Transportation

The Baltimore County Public School System (BCPS) provides children living a mile or more from school the privilege of riding a school bus. Students are expected to ride their assigned buses to and from school and be picked up at the same bus stop and discharged at the same bus stop. The Office of Transportation requires that each student rides only his/her assigned bus.

To **access student transportation information** under a parent/guardian sign-on in FOCUS, users should select “Child Info” under the student’s name on left side of the FOCUS window. Once “Child Info” is selected, users should select, “Transportation.” Within “Transportation,” users will see the Bus Number, Bus Route Name, Stop Description, and Stop Time for both the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) trips. **Please note that transportation buses and stops are assigned by the BCPS Office of Transportation and NOT West Towson Elementary School.**

Students are expected to follow basic rules on the bus. These include:

- Arriving at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the pick-up time
- Following directions, the first time they are given
- Staying seated, facing forward at all times
- Keeping all body parts inside the bus

- Keeping hands, feet, legs, arms, personal property, and your voice to themselves
- No eating, smoking, drinking, or vulgar language at any time on the bus

When students exit their buses on their trips home, they are to wait on the side of the road where they disembark. Students must stand away from the side of the bus until the bus pulls away, leaving better clearance for vision. When the traffic is cleared and it is safe to cross, students may proceed to the other side of the road. Although parents are not required to wait with children at the bus stop, BCPS strongly recommends that parents be present at the bus stop to supervise, especially if their children are enrolled in the primary grades. Parents are responsible for their children's behavior/supervision from the time they leave home until the bus picks up the children. Parents, guardians, or other unauthorized adults are not allowed to enter buses at the bus stops or at the school for any reason. While parents are encouraged to discuss bus concerns with the bus drivers, any issues that are unable to be resolved with the bus drivers should be brought to the attention of a school administrator who will work to resolve the issues. All BCPS buses include video recorders to record the rides to and from school. The recorded rides can be reviewed if a serious infraction occurs. However, per BCPS guidelines, "To maintain student confidentiality, videotapes and data files are only reviewed by appropriate administrators."

The BCPS "*Parent and Students' Guide to Transportation*" may be accessed at the website below, under the Policy, Rules, and Resources tab on the left-hand side.

http://bcpsbusinessservices.ss3.sharpschool.com/departments/business_services_operations/transportation

Arrival

West Towson Elementary School's doors open for children at 9:05 a.m. each morning. Supervision of students is not provided before this time. Students arriving at school before 9:05 a.m. must wait outside without WTE staff supervision. To avoid having children wait outside on cold or wet days, arrival plans should ensure that the students do not arrive prior to 9:05 a.m.

The bus loop in front of the school is reserved for bus use only during arrival. Due to traffic conditions, bus arrival times may vary. Cars should not enter or park in the bus loop in front of the school between 8:45 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Students transported to school by car should be dropped off in the carpool line following the procedures below in the "Carpool Riders" section.

Should parents have the need to come into the school for business during arrival time, they should park their cars and walk their children across the bus loop at the crosswalk. Children should never independently cross the crosswalk during arrival time as this is an area used by school buses. Drivers may not park cars in front of "No Parking" signs. They may not park in the handicapped spots unless they qualify for these parking spots.

If daycare coverage is needed for children before school, West Towson houses a private daycare program, Play Centers, in the school cafeteria. For further information regarding Play Centers, please call 410-296-4880.

Bus Riders

The driveway in the front of the building is reserved for use only by buses during arrival times. Bus arrival times vary according to the weather and traffic congestion. Cars should not enter or park in the bus loop in front of the school between 8:45 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Students transported to school on buses usually begin arriving at approximately 9:05 a.m. If buses arrive prior to 9:05 a.m., the children will remain on the buses until the school doors open. The buses drop off students in front of the school building, near the front door. Staff members greet and carefully monitor the arrival of students transported by buses.

Walkers

The only children who will walk to school at West Towson live in communities adjacent to the school campus. Most of these students use the walkway leading to Ridge Ruxton School's side parking lot. They will cross West Towson's back driveway using the crosswalks. They will then follow the sidewalk to the front of Ridge Ruxton School and enter West Towson's front door. Adult supervision will be provided at the crosswalk between 9:05 a.m. and 9:18 a.m. Parents who walk their children to school are asked to say their "goodbyes" and drop off their children in front of the school each morning. Allowing children to walk to class independently, with the help of our safeties and staff, will enhance the children's confidence and independence.

Carpool Riders

All West Towson students are provided with bus service to and from school, except for the children walking from the Ruxton Ridge community. To support WTES's focus on environmentally responsible living, parents are encouraged to avoid transporting their children to and from school by car. In addition to the environmental issues, the size of the school campus does not support a large carpool line. However, recognizing that there are circumstances which result in the need for parents to transport their children to or from school, a set of carpool procedures has been developed.

In the morning, after entering the school campus from Charles Street, drivers should turn right into the parking area down the hill from the Ridge Ruxton School. Drivers then drive around the back of Ridge Ruxton to the turnaround area behind West Towson. Staff members will be on hand to open doors and monitor the children as they enter the building through a hallway next to the gym. The children should be ready to exit their cars on the curb side when the drivers pull up, after brief, final good-byes. Children should not exit until staff members move over to their cars. Drivers will then loop back to the driveway behind Ridge Ruxton, turn in front of Ridge Ruxton, and exit the campus by turning left before entering the West Towson bus loop as was done in the past. It is important that drivers follow these guidelines and drive in a slow, safe, and considerate manner. **The speed limit on campus is 15 mph.** Buses, students, parents, and teachers have the right of way. In addition, West Towson shares a campus with a school focused on the needs of students with special needs. Being considerate of their safety is essential. Adult supervision is provided at the carpool drop-off area between 9:05 a.m. and 9:18 a.m.

The children walking between West Towson and the sidewalk beside Ridge Ruxton leading to their neighborhood will cross the driveway assisted by a staff member. The children and teacher have the right of way and will cross the driveway at the crosswalks.

Students should not be dropped off in the parking area in front of West Towson, as children would need to cross the bus loop during bus arrival. This scenario presents a potential for high risk due to the high volume of activity.

There are times when parents may need to accompany their children into the school in the morning to assist with the delivery of projects or to speak with support staff. These parents will need to park their cars in the parking lot (not in a handicapped spot) and check in with the office. Caution should be taken when crossing the bus loop.

Instructional Day

The instructional day at West Towson Elementary School begins when the children arrive in their classrooms, no later than 9:20 a.m. Children arriving in their classrooms after 9:20 a.m. will be marked tardy. Students arriving late to class on a consistent basis will be unable to fully benefit from this important transitional period as they begin their days at school.

Kindergarten

For the first several weeks of school, the kindergarteners will be escorted from their buses to meet their teachers in the rotunda. Kindergarten teachers will walk their students to the classrooms. Once the kindergarten children become familiar with the school and arrival routines, they will be able to walk from the bus and to their classrooms after 9:05 a.m. without their teachers. All kindergarten classrooms are on the main entrance level of the school.

Dismissal

West Towson Elementary School's instructional day concludes for students at 4:00 p.m. when the afternoon announcements are broadcast over the intercom. Dismissal begins following the announcements.

Bus Riders

Students traveling home on buses will be called for dismissal by their bus colors. All students will line up according to their bus colors and be escorted outside and onto the buses by staff members. For the safety of all students, the Department of Transportation will not permit children to ride on buses or to change bus stops to which they are not assigned on a daily basis.

Walkers

Each afternoon, walkers will be escorted across the driveway leading to the Ruxton Ridge community. Dismissal of walkers takes place following afternoon announcements at 4:05 p.m.

Carpool Riders

Car riders will be dismissed following afternoon announcements. These students will leave their classrooms and walk to the hallway outside of the cafeteria. After being checked in, they will exit through the gym to reach the carpool pick-up area. At the beginning of the year, a staff member will accompany the kindergarten students to the carpool line to ensure their safe arrival. Staff members carefully supervise the car rider pick-up area at all times.

Pick-up procedures are similar to those explained above for morning drop-off. After entering the school campus from Charles Street, drivers should turn right into the parking area down

the hill from the Ridge Ruxton School and drive around the back of Ridge Ruxton to the turn-around area behind West Towson. Once the West Towson staff members assigned to afternoon carpool duty arrive with the students behind the school, they will assist the children meeting their rides. Students will wait on the sidewalk until their cars arrive. When the weather is bad the children will wait in the hallway.

Drivers are asked to arrange for children to enter their cars on the passenger side. This avoids the need for children to walk into traffic. Once again, drivers are reminded to drive in a slow, cautious manner while on school grounds, allowing buses and people crossing the driveway to have the right of way. Parents collecting their children in the carpool line may not leave their cars while waiting in line. Students may not leave the carpool waiting area to meet drivers who have parked their cars or are waiting in line. It is important that drivers follow these guidelines and drive in a slow, safe, and considerate manner. **The speed limit on campus is 15 mph.** Buses, students, parents, and teachers have the right of way. In addition, we share a campus with a school that focuses on the needs of students with special needs. Being considerate of their safety is essential.

The children walking between West Towson and the sidewalk beside Ridge Ruxton leading to their neighborhood will cross the driveway assisted by a staff member. The children and teacher have the right of way and will cross at the crosswalks on the driveway.

Early Dismissal

Early dismissal should occur only in unavoidable situations. Doctor/dentist appointments, etc. should be scheduled after regular school hours whenever possible to minimize the loss of instructional time. For the safety of all students, parents/guardians must come directly to the school office to sign out their children for an early dismissal. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed on the emergency form without permission from the parents/guardians. Office personnel will request identification, and if the adult is authorized to take the child, office staff will call the child to the office. (Children will not be called to the office prior to the arrival of the parents/guardians.) Under no circumstances are parents or other adults to remove children from school without following these procedures.

Parents who are volunteering at the school or are at the school for other reasons should not take their children home directly from the classroom. They must come to the office and follow the appropriate procedures to ensure all staff members are aware of the dismissal and that the dismissal of the child is recorded.

Dismissal times at West Towson are extremely busy. **To avoid confusion during dismissal time, parents are asked to refrain from picking up students from the office between 3:30 p.m. and the end of the school day.** End of the day requests for early dismissal interfere with the safe, efficient, and accurate end-of-the-day transition activities and the office staff may not be able to accommodate or honor the requests made between 3:30 p.m. and the end of the school day.

Parents arriving before dismissal to have their children dismissed early will need to report to the office, request that their children be dismissed from class, and sign their children out as directed by the office staff. Parents are asked to notify the school or teacher of the plan for early dismissal in written form, no later than the morning of the day their children need to leave prior to the regular dismissal time.

In the event of an emergency resulting in the need for an early dismissal, please do not email office staff. Instead, please call the school office as soon as possible to ensure the notice is received in a timely manner so the office staff members have ample time to make the change to the child's dismissal plan.

Changes to Dismissal Plans

West Towson Elementary School will be responsible for dismissing children according to the information that parents write on the *Daily Transportation Information Form*. Any changes in dismissal must be communicated to the school office **in writing**. Parents are asked to assist with dismissal procedures by making certain that children are clear about dismissal plans before they enter school each morning. Last minute changes in plans are often confusing to children. **All changes in transportation plans must be put in writing and sent to the children's teachers no later than the mornings of the changes. Adjustments in transportation will not be made without written approval from parents.** When emailing the dismissal change, parents must email both the classroom teacher as well as the office secretaries, Mrs. Ford (dford3@bcps.org) and Mrs. Sidou (asidou@bcps.org). Teachers are often engaged in teaching or other duties which may prevent the timely receipt of your email.

Any last-minute dismissal changes need to be completed before 3:20 p.m., in order for the office staff to reach the children affected by the changes before the end of the school day. End of the day phone calls to the office to change your children's dismissal plans create many problems for the school. These calls should be limited to emergencies only. When numerous calls are made to the office near the end of the school day, it is difficult for the office to honor these requests. Parents will be asked to fax a signed note or a copy of the *Dismissal Change Form* if the change is made at the end of the school day.

A *Dismissal Change Form* has been provided in the back-to-school mailing with Arrival/Dismissal information. It is recommended that parents copy this form and send it to school with their children whenever there is a change in dismissal plans. Additional copies are available in the school office. Again, to ensure that your children arrive home safely, take time to carefully plan dismissal arrangements and communicate them clearly to your children and to the school.

Please review these arrival and dismissal procedures with your children. The procedures have been designed to ensure the safety of all students at our school. Your patience, courtesy, and willingness to work with the school will assist us in well-organized and safe dismissals. Please contact a school administrator at 443-809-3869, if you have any questions or concerns regarding these procedures.

Once again, your assistance and cooperation are appreciated, as we work together to ensure the safety of the West Towson Elementary School community.

Before/After Care

Play Centers, Inc., a fee-based program, provides before and after school childcare in the West Towson cafeteria. The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. through 9:05 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. through 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in this service, please contact Play Centers, Inc. directly through email at playcenters@playcenters.org or by phone at (410) 296-4880. During

the school year the phone number for the Play Centers' Program at West Towson is (410) 296-0803.

Inclement Weather and Related Closures

To provide a quality education for all students, BCPS supports every opportunity to ensure that students are in class and learning; however, when weather conditions or forecasted conditions threaten the safety of children and staff, decisions must be made to curtail class time to ensure that the students are able to get to school safely or return home without incident. If schools are too close for the day, an announcement will be made early in the morning. If schools are to close early, or if afternoon or evening programs are to be cancelled, the decision will be made as much in advance as possible. Whenever schools close early due to inclement weather, the after-care program closes as well.

All parents should provide the school with the *Annual Student Information Form* by the first day of school. The information on this form is essential in the event that West Towson or all Baltimore County Public Schools need to close early for weather related issues, unexpected closures, or emergencies. Information on the back of this form directs the school about the dismissal option you prefer in the event that schools need to unexpectedly close early. If an option is not selected or if parents have selected more than one option, their child(ren) will not be dismissed until the parents are contacted. At times, schools are given very short notice about early closings and the office is unable to contact parents when dismissal plans require clarification. In those situations, students will remain at school until parents are notified. If parents are unsure of the option that was selected for their children, they should contact the school as soon as possible with this information. It is difficult to provide many parents with the choices listed on their forms as the staff is preparing for an unexpected, early dismissal. It is recommended that all parents maintain a copy of the completed form for their reference. Please remember to contact the school if there are changes in this information during the school year.

In the event of inclement weather please check the following locations for information on school closings and/or early closings:

- BCPS school status information line: 443-809-5555
- TV/Radio: local radio and television stations, including The Education Channel, Comcast Cable Channel 73, Verizon FIOS Channel 35.
- Internet: www.bcps.org

Please do not call the school for information about delayed openings or early closings as the school's focus needs to be ensuring the safe dismissal of the students.

Visitors

All parents and other visitors entering the school must report to the office and sign in. Visitors will be asked to identify themselves and the purpose of their visit prior to entering the building. When parents or other visitors enter the school for the first time, they will be asked to present a government-issued photo ID, or driver's license, to a staff member in the school office. All approved visitors will be issued a badge to wear during their visit to the school. Once a visitor has been given a badge, he/she may fulfil the purpose of the visit as it was described to the office secretary. If a visitor would like to change the purpose of their visit, he/she must report back to the office to clear the desired change in plans. It is critical for the safety and security

of our students that visitors report directly to the location intended for their visit and then report to the office to sign out when finished the designated activity.

Only visitors/spectators who have been volunteer trained are authorized to engage with children other than their own. Therefore, untrained/unapproved visitors who are observing in classrooms should not participate in classroom activities with their children's classmates. We strongly encourage all parents, guardians, and grandparents to complete volunteer training at the beginning of each school year to allow for full participation in school events. Directions for completing the volunteer application/training/approval process are in the *Volunteer* section of this handbook.

In addition to staff members, volunteers and substitutes will also be given badges. Anyone in the school building without a badge should expect to be approached and questioned. These guidelines are designed to assist us in providing a safe and orderly school environment. West Towson strongly encourages parental involvement and participation in the school and our program. These new measures are intended to ensure the safety and security of the school community, not to limit parent involvement in our school.

Staff members have requested that parents not visit classrooms in the morning after 9:05 a.m. unless they have a scheduled appointment. Students begin working on transitional tasks upon arrival in the homeroom each morning, and teachers need to prepare for the day and assist their students with their morning activities. If a parent needs to speak with a teacher and has not scheduled an appointment, it is important that the parent leave a note with one of the secretaries, and the message will be delivered to the teacher. Our teachers' first priorities must be to their students.

Visitors to the school may not visit or eat with students in the cafeteria during lunch. Seating in the cafeteria is limited and students must have the space required to facilitate the lunch period.

Parents and Dropped Off Items

The office will send email messages to teachers about non-emergency items that parents may drop off for their children. These items may include forgotten library books, projects, snacks, water bottles, or tennis shoes for gym. These items will be placed on a student drop off table in the school vestibule, and teachers will receive emails requesting that the children owning the items retrieve their items from the vestibule. The office will call the classrooms and interrupt instruction **ONLY** if the item dropped off is a lunch, a pair of glasses, or a backpack.

ATTENDANCE

In accordance with state laws and BCPS Rule 5120, students are required to attend school each year as outlined on the Baltimore County Public Schools Calendar. It is important for students to attend school regularly and on time. During arrival time, students participate in transition activities and begin morning work. When students do not have this time to transition, it can lead to distractibility, frustration, and loss of instructional time. Please note the following absence/tardy information.

Our school doors open for students at 9:05 a.m. The school day begins at 9:20 a.m. Students arriving after 9:20 a.m. are tardy.

- To obtain a late pass, students will need to be escorted to the office by a parent or guardian and present a note explaining the reason for the lateness.
- State law requires attendance each day of school. Personal illness, religious holidays, and death in the immediate family are considered legal or excused absences.
- When a child is absent from school, he/she must bring a note, signed by a parent/guardian, on the day he/she returns to school. The note should indicate the date(s) and reason for the absence. If a note is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.
 - If a parent expects that their child will be absent two or more days due to illness, he/she should call the school nurse at 443-809-8037, to share information of the child's illness.
 - Parents should call the school office to discuss a prolonged absence with a teacher and/or an administrator.
 - If a student is absent for an extended period of time because of illness, a written statement of explanation may be required from the physician on the day of the student's return to class.
 - Students missing 20% or more of the school days within each grading period are subject to receiving a failing grade and may be expected to repeat the grade level the following year.
- Unexcused absences, of 10% or more, may result in failure for that marking period.
- Students are expected to assume the responsibility for maintaining the continuity of learning regardless of the reason for absence.
- Students absent for unlawful reasons may not be entitled to makeup work.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Medical

In order to keep other students and staff healthy, it may be necessary to keep a child home due to illness. Here are some general guidelines to help families determine if a child is too ill for school.

- Has a temperature above 100 degrees before any medication has been given (the child should be fever-free for 24 hours before return)
- Has had an episode of vomiting or diarrhea
- Has a rash that has not been identified by a physician
- Has a severe, persistent cough

Taking medications during school hours is discouraged. There are occasions, however, when a physician considers it necessary to administer medication during the school day. In these cases, the Baltimore County policy determines that:

- No medication (prescribed or non-prescribed) will be administered in school without the parent/guardian's written authorization. Parental consent and a physician's order are

required for each illness and for each prescription medication ordered for administration at school by the nurse.

- It is the parent's responsibility to arrange for the delivery of properly labeled medication to the school. **All medication must be in the original container.** Children are not permitted to bring medication to school. (BCPS Rule 5540).
- The school must have on file in the student's health folder a "Physician's Medication Authorization for Prescription" and/or "Discretionary Medication" form before medication can be administered. These forms may be obtained on the BCPS website at [Medication In Schools](#).
- No child is allowed to keep any medication on his/her person. This includes over-the-counter medicines such as cough drops or headache medicines.

Emergency Contacts

It is vital that family members' current phone numbers be on file with both the nurse and the front office in the event that a child becomes ill or is injured. If a parent is not available to pick up a child during the day, at least two emergency contacts will be contacted. These contacts must be included on the form. Please note that the school will only release children to the contacts on their *Student Emergency Contact Information Form*. The school is not equipped to care for an injured or ill child for an extended amount of time.

Head Lice Policy

An unfortunate part of childhood is the appearance of head lice. Another reason to keep a child at home would be if live lice are observed in the child's hair. The child must be treated and checked by the nurse before he/she can return to school. Parents are asked to contact the nurse if their children have lice. Upon return to school, the child will be checked for 2 weeks to ensure that nits are being removed at home and no new lice are seen. Every child with lice should be re-treated after 1 week. Instructions as to home and environment procedures will be sent home along with a checklist to ensure that the lice are eliminated. Children may remain in school if the nits (eggs) are decreasing in number, and no new nits appear. Removal of all nits is strongly encouraged.

Food in School

All food items brought in for consumption or other use in school must be store bought with the nutritional labels clearly visible and intact. Store bought snacks, with nutritional labels, are necessary in preventing life threatening incidents as all ingredients are identified on the package. This will help ensure that all children are served/using food that is safe to eat or touch. All food brought into the building for consumption by students must be approved by the school nurse to ensure that children with food allergies will not be exposed to any allergens. To respect the schedule of the school nurse, parents should call him/her prior to an event to discuss food that will be brought to school.

Classroom Celebrations

Classroom celebrations are held at the teachers' discretion. Homeroom teachers will send home specific information concerning each classroom event or celebration. Classroom celebrations in school will involve non-food activities. The following are a few suggestions of non-food activities:

- Reading a book to the class
- Playing a short game
- Give out party bags filled with pencils, stickers, novelty erasers, or school supplies rather than candy

Student birthdays will be recognized by announcing them over the intercom during morning announcements. Following announcements, the students who are celebrating their birthdays are invited to the office to collect a token gift (birthday pencil) commemorating this important day. If a student does not wish to be recognized in this manner, he or she should make the teacher aware who will in turn contact an administrator with this information.

To control the frequency of birthday celebrations, each homeroom teacher will identify one day each month during which all student birthdays occurring during the month will be celebrated. Teachers will send home notifications of monthly birthday celebrations. Parents involved in birthday celebrations must be volunteered trained.

Personal invitations to celebrations outside of school will not be disseminated at school unless every child in the class is invited to the celebration. Personal invitations to only selected class members should be sent using the U.S. Postal Service, email, or other means outside of the school setting.

Safety

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency or crisis, a well-organized and rehearsed safety action plan goes into effect. The goal of the plan is to ensure the safety of the students and account for all members of our school during any emergency. Our plan includes the following drills:

- **Evacuation:** For use when conditions outside are safer than conditions inside.
- **Drop, Cover, Hold:** For use in an environmental threat such as an earthquake.
- **Lockdown:** For use in protecting building occupants from imminent dangers in the building or immediately outside.
- **Lockout (replaces Alert Status)** For use in securing access to buildings, usually resulting from an event in the community.
- **Severe Weather:** For use in severe weather emergencies.
- **Shelter in Place:** For use in securing access to a building and for controlling movement within a building.
- **Alice Protocol:** Used in a situation involving an active assailant or the imminent threat of an active assailant.

Additional information about the emergency responses is provided in Appendix C. During an emergency it is important that phone lines remain accessible to communicate with BCPS Central Office Safety and Security staff and local public agencies which assist in emergencies. If parents are aware of an ongoing emergency situation, they are asked to avoid calling the school so the school staff may focus on handling the emergency and on open communication with these entities. The school will communicate information regarding the situation to families as soon as possible.

BCPS Procedures for Verifying Parent Identity

Baltimore County Public Schools requires that schools verify parent identity prior to updating or providing student information.

- When parents request this information in person, they will be required to provide a valid form of ID (License, Military ID, Passport, etc.).
- When parents request this information over the phone, school staff is required to end the call and call the parent at the number on record in the BCPS One Student Information System. If the parent answers the call to the phone number on record, school staff may then update or provide student information to the parent.
- When parents request this information over the phone and the identity cannot be verified by phone, the caller will be told that they will need to bring in a valid form of photo identification to the school to receive the information requested.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

FOCUS

The Focus Parent Portal is a tool designed to enhance communication and involvement for you in your child's education. FOCUS is the school system's digital portal for curriculum and instruction, assessments, student data, reporting, and analysis. It is a fully integrated, customized, and user-friendly Web based learning management system.

As part of FOCUS, students, teachers, administrators, and parents have access to a web-based portal 24/7. The portal is designed to provide various functionalities to support the instructional delivery specific to each audience. The portal also allows parents and guardians to stay informed and engaged in their child's education by providing access to grades, schedules, attendance, some textbooks, databases, and various other data elements.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home four times a year for students in grades 1 through 5. Student report cards can also be printed and accessed through the Focus Parent Portal. The instructional code used on the report cards varies with the grade level of the child; intermediate students in grades four and five receive letter grades, and primary students receive grades the following indicators of progress: consistently demonstrating, progressing, or needs development, CD, P, or N, respectively. See the BCPS calendar for parent conference dates and report card distribution dates.

Kindergarten Progress Reports

Kindergarten progress reports are distributed to parents two times a year. Conference days are designated within the school calendar for parents to meet with their children's kindergarten teachers to discuss their progress. If parents have concerns regarding their child's progress, additional conferences with the teacher can be scheduled. See the BCPS calendar for kindergarten conference dates.

Homework

Homework is an important extension of student learning and provides the following benefits for students:

- Encourages the development of independent study habits, skills, and responsibilities.
- Reinforces, enriches, and extends learning by providing a variety of educational opportunities outside the classroom.
- Provides an additional opportunity for family involvement in the child's education.

Independent, long-term projects may be assigned as well. Homework may be assigned to document understanding of a skill or concept.

Communication with the School

The success of our school is based in part upon the effective channels of communication we establish between staff and parents. Therefore, it is imperative that all school forms communicating important information be completely and accurately submitted/updated in a timely manner. Parents' first and most important contact within the school is the teacher. The child's classroom teacher is the best single resource for information and advice concerning a student's studies, peer relationships, homework, and individual development. West Towson teachers welcome your communication messages and will return your calls or e-mails as soon as they are able to do so, usually within 24 hours during the work week.

Parents should feel free to contact teachers and staff during the school day through phone call messages, e-mails, notes, or letters. Of course, teachers cannot respond while they are teaching or supervising students. Parent input is very important. When concerns/questions arise, parents should request a scheduled meeting with teachers. Conferences provide the opportunity for teachers to give parents undivided attention. Conferences will not be conducted during arrival/dismissal times as the teacher's attention is on the safety of students during these transition times.

Student Planners

Every student in grades 1-5 is issued a planner at the beginning of the school year. Parents should review assignments and any notes in this book on a daily basis. Parents should also sign their names in the box at the bottom of the page to indicate to their children's teachers that they have seen the assignments and are aware of all notes written.

Newsletters

The monthly school newsletter is available on the school website. Parents who provide a working email address to their children's classroom teachers will receive an electronic copy of the school newsletter. Paper copies are also available upon request. To receive a hardcopy of the school newsletter, please contact one of the secretaries in the school office. This publication is the primary source of up-to-date information about the school community and upcoming activities and events. In addition to the school newsletter, classroom teachers will email their class or grade newsletters to parents to keep them informed of classroom schedules, upcoming events, and instructional topics.

Team Meetings/Support

Scheduled team meetings may be held with a child's teachers, parents, school administrator, and other related service providers in order to discuss a student's academic progress and school related needs. Student Support Team (SST) meetings may be held to discuss student concerns and when appropriate, to create student educational plans. Special education concerns and services are addressed at Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meetings. Special education meetings are requested when students are unable to access their grade level curriculum with general education supports, are not responding to Tier One and Two interventions, and are performing significantly below grade level. A child becomes eligible for special education when the IEP team identifies the child as having a disability and in need of specially designed instruction. The disability must have an educational impact. Parents may request a team meeting to discuss their child's progress and/or to determine whether additional educational support is needed. Please contact the Assistant Principal to request a team meeting.

Registration

Kindergarten Students

Children entering kindergarten must be five years old, on or before September 1 of the present school year. Kindergarten attendance is mandatory in the state of Maryland. Please call the school office after March 1st to request information about kindergarten registration for the following school year.

Students in Grades Kindergarten-Grade 5

When registering a child in a Baltimore County Public School or transferring from another Maryland Public School, the following documentation is needed:

- Child's birth certificate or certification of birth form
- Current immunizations
- Government issued photo ID of parent/guardian, (ID must indicate current address)
- Proof of residence which may be one of the following: deed, mortgage coupon book, property tax bill, lease, (must be a current lease)
- 3 current bills addressed to the residence, dated within 60 days
- Maryland Student Transfer Record form (if transferring from a Maryland Public School)

Withdrawal

When a child needs to be withdrawn from West Towson Elementary School, his or her parents are requested to contact the school office with the withdrawal date as soon as possible, as it may take up to 10 business days to complete the required paperwork.

Student records cannot be given to parents. Student records cannot be faxed. A request must be received from the receiving school before the child's records can be forwarded to the new school.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Behavior Expectations

Students are expected to follow the behavior guidelines outlined in the BCPS Student Handbook. Each year teachers and administrators review behavior expectations with students. Early in September students will receive the Student Handbooks and parents are expected to review the handbooks with their children and return the signed and dated acknowledgement form. In order to make behavior expectations more memorable and elementary school friendly, students learn the Westy Code of Conduct. Teachers instruct students regarding what appropriate behavior looks like in each area of the school building and on the bus.

Use of Personal Electronics in School

Students are not allowed to use any personal electronic communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, or any other wireless communication devices (which are not part of the educational program) during regular school hours. Electronic devices may not be used while being transported on the bus unless special permission is granted by the administration.

The administration strongly discourages students from bringing electronic devices to school. However, if the need to bring a device is unavoidable, the device must be turned off and stored in the locker or book bag during school hours. The student is responsible for his/her communication devices and the school will not be held liable for loss or damage to these devices. If a student is found using an electronic communication device during school hours, the device will be confiscated and will only be returned to the parent.

Personal Entertainment Items

Students are not allowed to bring any toys, games, sports equipment, trading cards, etc. to school. They interfere with student learning by causing disagreements between students, distractions during instruction, and disappointment and conflict if lost or broken. Therefore, students should only bring the items listed on the school supply lists distributed by their classroom teachers. Also, please note that Baltimore County Public Schools does not accept responsibility for damage or loss of students' personal property, as stated in the BCPS *Student Handbook* distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Lost and Found

A lost and found collection is maintained in the school lobby. This gives students an opportunity to check for missing items daily. Lost items that are not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated to a charitable organization. Please label all of students' apparel, school supplies, and lunch boxes/bags for easy identification and return.

Supplies

The school provides all textbooks and instructional materials. Classroom teachers provide a list of suggested school supplies for each student. The lists are also available in the school office and on the school and PTA websites. Please check periodically throughout the course of the school year to ensure your child has all required supplies, and to replenish them, as necessary. Classroom donations are always welcomed.

Dress Code

Children should be dressed appropriately for safety, modesty, personal hygiene, climate, and consideration of others. Please note the following dress code guidelines:

- Shorts and skirts should not be too short or too tight.

- Shirts should cover the entire torso. Halter-tops, spaghetti-straps, and bare midriff tops should not be worn.
- Undergarments should not show.
- Tennis shoes or rubber-soled shoes are recommended for safety reasons since they protect feet from injury and insect stings. This is required for participation in physical education classes and for using the playground equipment. Sandals, flip-flops, and other open shoes are not recommended for school.
- Shirts and clothing advertising alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or inappropriate language should not be worn to school.
- Art shirts or smocks are recommended to protect your child's clothing during art special area times.

If the home and the school work together to set clear and consistent expectations for student dress and behavior, a positive learning environment will be in place for all our children.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAMS

BCPS will adopt a systemwide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) model for the 2023-2024 school year and will provide free breakfast and lunch meals to all students. BCPS families will no longer be required to complete meal applications to determine eligibility. Healthy meals are a vital part of the learning process and students will have access to a wide array of fresh fruits and vegetables, bento boxes and salads, and much more throughout the school year.

The BCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services will continue to provide nutritious meals in a supportive environment for all BCPS students.

For breakfast or lunch snacks and A La Carte prices, please visit

https://businessservices.bcps.org/departments/business_services_operations/food_and_nutrition_services/breakfast_and_lunch_menus.

As a result of space limitations, parents/guardians as well as other visitors are not allowed to eat lunch in the cafeteria with their children.

PARENT INFORMATION

PTA Overview

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA®) at the national, state and county levels acts to advocate for all children and to foster closer relationships between the home, community, and school. Parents, community members and school staff work together to advocate for: the passing of laws that promote the success of all students; funding of school budgets which provide adequate resources for teachers and students.

The West Towson Elementary School PTA® promotes the ideals of the national association. The West Towson Elementary PTA® (<http://westtowsonpta.membershiptoolkit.com>) encourages all families and staff to join the association and participate in PTA® activities.

Family members can become active members by joining the association, attending PTA® meetings, volunteering to work on a PTA® committee, working as a volunteer, and/or supporting fundraising activities.

Student Privacy Options

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, as well as State regulation (COMAR 13A.08.02) permit the disclosure of directory information from a student's education record without the parent's prior written consent unless the parent has opted out of such disclosure. (To opt out means that a parent/eligible student does not permit BCPS to disclose a student's directory information.) Please note that, in certain situations, federal and state laws and regulations may permit or require the disclosure of the information from a student record to authorized persons or entities even if you have opted out of its disclosure as directory information. There are several opt out options to consider. This information will be sent home to families during the first week of school.

Since parents are not made aware of the Opt Out status of students other than their own children, the school requests that parents only take photographs of their own children during school events.

School Pictures

Lifetouch is the vendor selected by West Towson Elementary to take school pictures. Individual student photos and class photos, and other photos used in the yearbook are taken each year.

Volunteers

The Board of Education of Baltimore County and West Towson Elementary School recognize that participation in the work of the school by parents, guardians, and others provides important support for schools and students. Volunteers are encouraged to become involved and support student learning. Baltimore County Public School System (BCPS) recognizes the role volunteers have in supporting student learning. Parents, grandparents and other family or community members may volunteer for a variety of short term or long-term activities.

Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Volunteering to help with a PTA® organized event
- Donating goods, services, or time to school activities
- Assisting with a classroom activity (such as Mystery Reader)
- Helping teachers with curriculum-related activities in the classroom. (These vary depending on grade level and the individual teacher.)
- Helping at class special events (e.g., picnics, parties, field day)
- Being a Room Parent: organizing class parties, making phone calls, coordinating parent volunteers from the class for PTA® events
- Assisting in the library or art room
- Completing clerical/administrative work for teachers, or in the office (photocopying, etc.)
- Chaperoning field trips
- Working on the school grounds

- Helping cafeteria assistants and students during lunch
- Tutoring under a teacher's guidance in reading, writing, or math
- Other

Any parent or family member who is interested in participating in a school-activity or event which involves interactions with the students must complete volunteer training. It is recommended that the training be completed early in the school year. The training must be completed every year. To avoid missing opportunities to participate in school events during the school year, parents and family members are strongly encouraged to complete volunteer training as early in the school year as possible.

It is important to consider the following deadlines below. In order to participate in any school sponsored activity in which adults interact with students, adults are required to complete the volunteer application, orientation, and approval process. Directions for completing the online orientation can be found on the Baltimore County Website at www.bcps.org, under the Community tab and then volunteers. Once the course has been completed, you must submit the application and printed Completion of Orientation certificate. Hours of service are then recorded on the Volunteer Services Form. Volunteer screening helps ensure that students and staff work in safe environments.

To serve as a field trip chaperone, volunteers must:

1. Complete the BCPS volunteer training.
2. Sign the BCPS training certificate
3. **Submit both the application and certificate to the school office at least 30 days prior to the trip.** (BCPS Rule 6800)

To serve as a volunteer in any other capacity, volunteers must:

1. Complete the BCPS volunteer training
2. Sign the BCPS training certificate
3. **Submit both the application and certificate to the school office at least 24 hours prior to the event.**

The volunteer training session will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. West Towson provides assistance with the completion of the volunteer training and approval processes. The dates will be sent home in the first school newsletter. To ensure that everyone attending has access to a working computer, please call the office at 410-887-3869 to reserve your spot.

Additional Important Volunteer Information:

1. Volunteer duties must be completed in the presence of a BCPS employee and at the direction of a school administrator or volunteer.
2. Volunteers must be 21 years old.
3. Volunteers may not bring visitors, children, siblings, or others in their care when working in the school or volunteering during school sponsored activities.
4. Volunteers must treat all student and staff information confidentially.

5. Volunteers must seek immediate assistance from a staff member for any student in crisis.
6. Volunteers must report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
7. Volunteers must follow appropriate building safety procedures, including the requirement to sign in and out with the front office and to always wear an identification badge.
8. Volunteers should not bring any food or drink meant for student consumptions due to potential student allergies. It is recommended that volunteers avoid handling unwrapped or open student food and drinks as well. (BCPS Rule 1260)

There is often confusion about the difference between school volunteers and spectators/visitors. Spectators do not participate with the students other than their own child. They are usually members of an audience. For example, events when spectators are invited and do not serve as volunteers may include concerts, Memorial Day program, and farewell events. Some examples of volunteer activities include assistance with class birthday parties, serving as Mystery Reader, and helping with the Book Fair.

WEST TOWSON INFORMATION

Green School

West Towson Elementary is the first LEED certified school in the Baltimore County Public School System. This LEED certification relates to the design, structure, and construction of the building and the impact that the school building will have on the environment. West Towson Elementary is a 69,000 sq. ft., three story structure designed to lessen the impact on the environment. The school was built using 40%

recycled materials, and upon completion 95% of the total construction materials were recycled leaving only 5% to be disposed of in landfills. West Towson features a more efficient heating and cooling system, and the school is designed to use 40% less water than other buildings of comparable size. Also, all the wood used in the construction of

West Towson was obtained from tree farms. Some other features contributing to our unique and environmentally friendly school building include:

- Green Roof
- Motion Detection and Dual Switch Lighting
- Temperature Control System
- Bamboo Doors
- Wheat Board Cubbies

Technology

Technology is a prominent feature at West Towson Elementary. Some of the many technological features seen throughout the school will include:

- Access to electronic devices for students in Grades KG-5
- Laptop Carts for each kindergarten class
- Television Production Studio

- Portable Promethean Boards
- Screen and Projector in the Cafetorium

At West Towson Elementary, technology is used as one of many tools to enhance teaching and learning. To enhance teaching and learning, each classroom is equipped with:

- Promethean Board or I-Panel
- Document Cameras
- Laptop Computers
- Active Sound System

Support Programs

- **Library Media Specialist**

Students visit the library weekly for a scheduled 55-minute class. At that time, they receive instruction and sign out books. Books are expected to be returned the following week. Parents should check with their children to determine which day of the week the library period falls and make certain that the child brings the library books to school on the assigned day. If the books are not returned, new ones may not be signed out. Lost books should be paid for in a timely manner.

- **Nurse**

A full-time nurse is on duty in the school. When students feel ill, they are sent, with a pass from their classroom teacher, to visit the nurse, who will listen to each child's complaint and assess each child's condition. If a child's condition is deemed serious, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If the child's ailment is a minor one, the nurse may communicate with the family. All medication that needs to be taken at school must be given to the nurse in the original prescription bottle with the doctor's order. (See Health Services, page 11.)

- **ESOL Teacher**

An ESOL teacher is available to assist students whose native language is not English. The ESOL teacher will also help parents to understand their children's assignments and any papers that are sent home from school. Parents of ESOL students are encouraged to visit the ESOL classroom at Back-to-School Night to learn more about this valuable support program. They are also encouraged to check their child's take-home folder every day to see if there is ESOL homework, to practice English at home, and to contact the ESOL teacher to discuss their child's progress. ESOL students are tested annually to determine their English proficiency. After receiving these results, the ESOL teacher communicates with the parents to discuss the child's test results and ESOL placement.

- **Guidance Counselor**

Guidance services are available for students who are having difficulties with school or personal situations. Students may make an appointment with the counselor by writing a note or by requesting a meeting. The counselor is also available to meet with parents to discuss a variety of issues related to their children.

- **Reading Specialist**

A reading specialist is available to assist students who are having difficulty mastering basic reading skills. The reading specialist works very closely with the classroom teachers to identify students in need of service and to provide support. The reading specialist may also work on enrichment activities with children and develop school wide reading programs.

- **Special Educators**

Special education teachers collaborate with other educators, support staff, and parents to plan educational programming and coordinate provision of special education services for students who have an Individualized Education Plan, (IEP). Students are identified through the IEP team process and services are provided based on the student's IEP.

- **Speech and Language Therapist**

A speech and language clinician works directly with students who have been identified as needing speech therapy. Students are identified through the IEP team process, and services are provided based on the student's IEP.

- **Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist**

An occupational therapist and a physical therapist work directly with students who have been identified as needing one or both supports. Students are identified through the IEP team process, and services are provided based on students' IEPs (Individualized Education Plan),

Parking

During school wide events, shuttle buses will be available to transport parents, students, guests to the school, from parking areas in the Greenwood/Board of Education parking lot, on Charles Street. (Please refer to transportation notifications for specific events in school/classroom newsletters, throughout the school year. The parking lot designated for West Towson Elementary School use is behind Building E at the bottom of the hill of the Greenwood Campus.)

Carpooling is another option which lessens parking difficulties and promotes a cleaner environment.

West Towson is a LEED certified school, and the school community cares deeply about the environment. Several parking spaces are provided exclusively for vehicles which qualify as low emissions vehicles. These cars may park in the designated parking spaces closest to West Towson and facing Ridge Ruxton. To determine if your vehicle qualifies as under federal guidelines, please visit the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/index.do>. If a vehicle does not qualify as a low admissions vehicle, it should not be parked in these spaces.

During the school day administrators and administrative secretary may be required to attend meetings off site. It is important that their reserved parking spaces remain available for their use upon their return so that they are not delayed in conducting school business. Please do not park in these spaces during school hours. There are handicapped spaces in the West Towson parking lot designated for those in need of assistance. Drivers without this need should not park in those spaces.

Private School Requests for Records

West Towson Elementary School often receives requests from parents to send their child's records to private educational institutions for consideration of placement. As per Board Rule 5230, Student Records, this request must be received in writing along with a signed copy of the BCPS *Consent for Release of Records* form in order to release any information to another school or educational institution. Transcript requests are processed on a first come, first served basis. All requests will be processed within 15 business days after receipt of the completed form and payment in the amount of \$5.00 is received. **Please do not send these requests to your child's homeroom teacher. To expedite your request, please send the appropriate paperwork directly to the main office to be processed.**

Baltimore County Public Schools Bad Checks Policy

Issuers of dishonored checks presented to Baltimore County Public Schools will be given 10 days to submit full payment of the check plus actual bank charges incurred by BCPS by means of a money order, cashier's check, or cash. If this payment is not received by the end of 10 days, the issuers will need to submit full payment of the amount of the checks plus \$35.00. If payment is not received at the end of the 20-day period, BCPS will turn over the dishonored check, and all other available information related to this check, to the State's Attorney for criminal prosecution. If the dishonored check is turned over to the State's Attorney for collection, schools will not accept restitution from the check issuer. The funds will be remitted to the school by the State's Attorney's Office.

Appendix A

West Towson Special Event Descriptions

PTA Meetings: The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at WTES meets monthly to discuss goals for the school year and the various ways parents, teachers, and administrators can collaborate to support our children and enrich their school experience. All WTES parents are welcome to attend.

Field Trips: Each grade will have field trips throughout the school year that are grade-appropriate and build upon the content that children are learning in their classes. Parent chaperones must have their BCPS volunteer training and application submitted **thirty days** prior to any field trip.

Holiday Celebrations: Classroom celebrations may include games, stories, and activities led by teachers and room parents to celebrate various holidays and seasons.

Kindergarten Play Date: This event organized by the PTA provides an opportunity for rising kindergarteners and their families to meet at a WTES playground the week before the start of school.

Sneak-A-Peek (at your seat): WTES students and families are invited to WTES to meet their teachers, see their classrooms, and find their seats/lockers. This event occurs in the afternoon the week before school starts. Families may bring school supplies to the classrooms during this event.

Back to School Night: WTES parents are invited to this September evening event to learn about upcoming school activities, meet teachers and administrators, learn about the PTA's agenda, and budget, and receive an introduction to specific grade level units of study and expectations. Following an information session in the auditorium, parents will branch off to classrooms to meet with their children's teachers. In addition, the PTA will have tables with various committee members in the rotunda. Parents are encouraged to attend without their children.

Fall Picnic/Back to School Social: This event sponsored by the PTA, held on a Friday evening in September, is an opportunity for WTES students and families to gather at the beginning of the school year. It is held outside on the large playground and South Field. Families may choose to bring blankets, chairs, and food. The PTA provides activities, such as a DJ, photo booth, and free Italian Ice. The fall book fair is usually open during the event.

Book Fair: This fundraiser organized collaboratively by the PTA and school media specialist happens twice a year, in the fall and spring. Scholastic books and other items are available for students and parents to purchase at WTES. The book fair is held for one week and is set up outside of the school library. Students will have browsing and purchasing time during their library periods. Specific information will be sent home explaining how the children can make purchases in addition to a brochure of some of the books/ items for sale.

Family Social Night: This social event is typically held on a Friday evening. A designated movie may be projected outside in the back of WTES. Families may bring blankets, chairs, and snacks. Popcorn is complimentary. This event can be held in the fall, spring, or both.

Taste Off: This event provides an opportunity for students to taste healthy fruits and vegetables. Students will rotate through tasting stations in the rotunda in class groupings. This event is organized by the PTA Health and Wellness Committee and school nurse and is sponsored by local grocery stores. Parent volunteers are needed.

American Education Week: Occurring each November, this week presents the opportunity for WTES parents to see their children in action in their classrooms, engage with their children, and learn about their children's units of study. Each grade will schedule specific days/times that parents are invited to attend.

Westy Wellness Activity: This event is designed to promote health and wellness for students and families. Through the years, a variety of activities have taken place including an in-school activity designed to engage participants in a variety of physical activities.

Patriots and Defenders: This is a voluntary school-wide program that provides WTES students opportunities to expand their knowledge about the United States of America, the state of Maryland, and citizenship. Participating students will be provided with grade-appropriate patriotic facts to learn. Parent volunteers are important participants in the program and are needed to monitor the students' progress through their grade specific requirements.

Parents work with the students during scheduled sessions before school, after school, and during lunches. These volunteers are essential for the success of this program. All students who complete the program will be recognized during the annual Memorial Day Program. Students completing the requirements at the Patriot or Defender level will be invited to a reception held at the school following the Memorial Day Program. At the conclusion of the program, fourth and fifth graders attend a field trip to reinforce the information studied.

Teacher Appreciation Month: The month of May is Teacher Appreciation Month. The homeroom Room Parents and PTA plan activities to give back to the teachers and support staff members who educate the children. The PTA will also arrange a teacher luncheon.

Westy Walk: The Westy Walk is a school and parent sponsored event, a fun-filled day of activities for our students and their families. Held in May at a local venue, the event includes a student walk-a-thon, silent auction, raffles, music, and food. All money raised directly benefits the students and staff of West Towson Elementary School, through the Baltimore County Public Schools Education Foundation..

Field Day: This June event caps off the physical education (P.E.) year. During the event, students partake in games/activities including relay races, parachute games, dashes, and a tug of war.

Kindergarten Celebration: Kindergarten families are invited to this celebration scheduled close to the end of the school year. This event highlights the progress and accomplishments of our youngest Westies.

Fifth Grade Farewell Assembly: This end-of-the-year program celebrates the fifth-grade students as they head to middle school. It is usually held on one of the last days of the school year. Family and friends of WTES fifth graders are invited. Expect speeches, awards, music, a video, and more.

Spirit Days

One day each month is Spirit Day at West Towson! Children, staff, and visitors are invited to wear the school colors (blue and gold), school tee-shirts, and/or other spirit wear. Our mascot “Westy” often stops by in the rotunda or outside ready to greet the students as they enter the school.

Baltimore County Public Schools
Office of Food and Nutrition Services
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Non-Food Celebration and Reward Ideas

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT IDEAS

Parent Ideas—Please check with the classroom teacher in advance to ensure acceptability for the class and to provide advance notice for scheduling purposes.

- ☐ Give small favor bags (pencils, stickers, glow sticks, erasers, notepads, etc.).
- ☐ Donate a book to the class and schedule a time to read it to them.
- ☐ Donate classroom supplies (books, games, musical items).
- ☐ Provide supplies and directions for a craft (bonus if parents come to class to help with the craft).
- ☐ Donate recess items (balls, hula hoops, etc.) to the class in the student's honor.
- ☐ Coordinate a book swap – students bring in a book to “trade” with classmates.
- ☐ Create a treasure box with donations of non-food items for students to choose from as a reward.

Class Reward Ideas

- ☐ Allow time for music and dancing.
- ☐ Hold class outdoors.
- ☐ Schedule free time at the end of class.
- ☐ Initiate a group activity.
- ☐ Provide a homework coupon.
- ☐ Bestow a certificate/trophy/ribbon/plaque in recognition of an achievement.
- ☐ Allow students to eat lunch in the classroom or outdoors.
- ☐ Take a class vote to hold a special dress-up day.
- ☐ Have students help develop a list of non-food items that will work best for their classroom.
- ☐ Have students earn points through good behavior in the classroom that later results in a weekly reward.
- ☐ Reward a lunch time with the teacher at a special decorated teacher's table.
- ☐ Reward a lunch time with the principal at a special decorated table.
- ☐ Allow students to be teacher's assistant or teach a class.
- ☐ Tub and cotton balls: Drop a cotton ball in the class or tub as a reward for good behavior. Once the tub is filled, the class gets a extra recess.

Sports-Related Giveaway Ideas

- ☐ Paddleballs
- ☐ Frisbees
- ☐ Water bottles
- ☐ Nerf balls
- ☐ Hula hoops
- ☐ Head and wrist sweat bands
- ☐ Jump ropes

- ☐ Soccer balls

Toys/Trinkets Ideas

- ☐ Finger puppets
- ☐ Stuffed animals
- ☐ Plastic or rubber figurines
- ☐ Puzzle games
- ☐ Magnifying glasses
- ☐ Playing cards
- ☐ Stretchy animals
- ☐ Inflatable toys
- ☐ Action figures

Fashion Wear Ideas

- ☐ Hair accessories (barrettes, headbands, ribbons)
- ☐ Bracelets, necklaces
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Hats or caps
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Shoelaces

General Ideas

- ☐ Key chains
- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Cups
- ☐ Magnets
- ☐ Crazy straws

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Appendix C

Universal Emergency Response Procedures – What Parents Need to Know

Once an administrator calls for one of the universal emergency responses below, students, employees, service providers, and visitors are to immediately follow the procedures provided. Notification is to be given in an age-appropriate manner. Parents should not come to a building while the occupants are under one of the procedures below as it may endanger the parent and/or students and staff. Staff will communicate with parents as soon as they are able to do so.

EVACUATION – *For use when conditions outside are safer than conditions inside.*

When a school's or office's occupants are told to follow their evacuation procedures, there is a condition within the building that makes it safer for them to be out of the building. There are designated meeting locations for an evacuation with alternate locations if necessary.

DROP, COVER, AND HOLD – *For use in an environmental threat such as an earthquake.*

When the drop, cover, hold response is called, occupants of a building will take cover away from windows or any areas that are likely to be affected.

LOCKDOWN – *For use in protecting building occupants from imminent dangers in the building or immediately outside.*

When a school or office building is on lockdown, no one can enter or leave the building. Movement within the building is restricted, and individuals within the building remain behind locked doors until cleared to move by first responders or when the event is deemed over.

LOCKOUT – *For use in securing access to buildings, usually resulting from an event in the community.*

When a school or office building is on lockout, no one can enter or leave the building without the principal's or office head's permission. That building's external doors are secured but instruction in schools or work within office building is conducted as normal. Entry to or exit from a building is granted on a case-by-case basis and usually in conjunction with approval by the Baltimore County Police Department.

SEVERE WEATHER SAFE AREA – *For use in severe weather emergencies.*

When a severe weather response is called, occupants of a building will take cover away from windows or any areas that are likely to be affected. Dismissal may be delayed.

SHELTER IN PLACE – *For use in securing access to a building and for controlling movement within a building.*

When occupants of a building are told to shelter in place, they remain in their locations. Activities within that location can continue but students do not move from one location to another. If there is a threat of chemicals from outside of the building, staff make every effort to seal the building from outside toxins by shutting down their air handling systems and blocking fumes from entering the building.

ALICE PROTOCOL – *Used in a situation involving an active assailant or the imminent threat of an active assailant.* When an ALICE protocol is called, occupants will respond by evacuating or locking down based on information they have about the location of the assailant. ALICE stands for alert, lockdown, inform, counter, and evacuate.

Appendix D



Bus Discipline Procedures and Consequences

The code below classifies unacceptable behavior into four levels. The examples are not exhaustive but illustrative. Additionally, all consequences are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the behavior. The Office of Transportation reserves the right to consider extenuating circumstances in determining disciplinary action.

Level 1	
Infraction	Consequences
Infractions that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screaming • Failure to stay seated • Littering on the bus • Tampering with the possessions of other passengers 	The bus driver reports infractions on the bus. The school administrator administers consequences. This action may include any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning and referral issued • Contact with parent • Assigned seat at the discretion of driver
Level 2	
Infraction	Consequences
More severe infractions that interfere with the safe transportation of students. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated occurrences of Level 1 behaviors • Bullying other passengers, including verbal abuse • Profanity towards staff • Damage to the bus interior/exterior 	The bus driver reports infractions on the bus. The school administrator administers consequences. This action may include any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral issued • Contact with parent • Assigned seat at the discretion of driver • Loss of bus privileges for up to 5 days and cost of repairs
Level 3	
Infraction	Consequences
Actions that endanger the safety of the driver or students and which impairs the driver's ability to drive safely. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated occurrences of Level 1 or 2 behaviors • Refusal to remain in seats • Sexual misconduct • Throwing objects • Refusal to follow staff directions for safety 	The bus driver reports infractions on the bus. The school administrator administers consequences. At more serious levels, the Director of Transportation may be involved. This action may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral issued • Contact with parent • Loss of bus privileges for 6 to 9 days • Repeated incidents of Level 2 behavior may result in removal from transportation for the remainder of the school year

Level 4	
Infraction	Consequences
<p>Infractions that endanger the safety of the driver or students and may require local police to intervene. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting, including pushing and/or wrestling Sexual misconduct Possession of dangerous objects or weapons Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs or controlled substances Opening emergency exits and/or exiting the bus without authorization 	<p>The bus driver reports infractions on the bus. The school administrator administers consequences. At more serious levels, the Director of Transportation may be involved. This action may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral issued Contact with parent Loss of bus privileges 10 days Repeated incidents may result in removal from transportation for the remainder of the school year Illegal activity will be referred to Baltimore County Police Department Suspension from school and/or extended suspension

Consequences for repeat infractions related to transportation include, but are not limited to:			
1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
<p>Parent notification required Appropriate Action required</p> <p>Student Conference</p> <p>Seat change on bus</p> <p>Bus or School Suspension commensurate with offense</p> <p>Code of Student Conduct implemented as appropriate</p>	<p>Bus Suspension (up to 5 days)</p>	<p>Bus Suspension (6 to 9 days)</p>	<p>Bus Suspension (remainder of the school year)</p>
<p>Appropriate Action Required</p> <p>Additional Bus or School Suspension commensurate with offense</p> <p>Implement Code of Student Conduct as Appropriate</p> <p>For students with disabilities, bus suspension is counted as a suspension from school if transportation is included as a related service on the IEP/504 Plan</p>			

Behavior on the School Bus

Riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if misconduct jeopardizes the safe operation of the school bus or the safety of students riding the bus. School suspension is a possible sanction.

Behavior or activity jeopardizing the safe operation of the school bus or interfering with the welfare of other vehicle occupants is prohibited. The school bus operator will report promptly and in writing to appropriate administrative staff any conduct appearing to require disciplinary action. After administrative staff evaluation, appropriate disciplinary action will follow. A copy of the disposition will be returned to the school bus operator.

Video/Digital Cameras and Audio Recording Devices

School buses are equipped with video/digital cameras and audio recording devices. These tools monitor the passenger area of the bus. As such, you are subject to audio surveillance. The objective is to provide an important additional tool to assist the driver and administration in managing student conduct on school buses, an important safety consideration that benefits all.