

# WESTERLY CREEK ELEMENTARY FAMILY HANDBOOK

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**WESTERLY CREEK ELEMENTARY** is a neighborhood school that serves 3 year olds through second grade. The school will grow year by year to become a school serving 3 year olds through 5th grade in 2011. The Westerly Creek Community believes that a love of learning, high academic achievement and parental involvement are keys to a lifelong education.

The following is important information about Westerly Creek Elementary. If you have a question that is not addressed in this handbook please feel free to visit the school. Most questions can be answered by a member of the office staff, your child's teacher or one of the administrative staff. Please read the following pages and become familiar with some of the basic information concerning the school.

## ADULTS ON CAMPUS

Your child's safety is our number one concern. With that in mind any non-staff adult on campus must sign in at the office and wear a volunteer name tag or a Visitor badge. Whether you are coming to volunteer for several hours or just to drop off a lunch, please remember to come to the office first. The name tag serves as a visual id that lets any staff member know immediately who belongs in the school and reinforces our monitoring of people on our campus.

All parents who have students in a classroom that has outside access (ECE and Kindergarten) must adhere to this rule unless dropping off or picking up your child. You will not be permitted to enter the class during regular school hours via the outside classroom doors.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

**The school day begins at 9:00 a.m. for all students.** Students arrival time is between 8:55 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Students (K-2nd) can report to the playground at 8:45 where they are supervised until 9:00 a.m. At 9:00 they will be asked to line up at classroom doors or in front of the back entrance. ECE students must be signed in by a parent or guardian daily. Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Late arrival is an interruption to those already engaged in learning activities and results in a loss of instruction time for the tardy student. Students arriving after 9:05 a.m. must report to the office before going to class and are expected to have a note from a parent explaining the reason for the tardiness. In addition, parents of students in all grades need to walk their child into the building if arriving after 9:05 a.m. to ensure the child's safe passage into his/her scheduled class. All absences and tardiness become part of a child's permanent record file. Dismissal begins at 3:45 p.m. when the bell rings. Faculty members supervise the building exits during dismissal. The front of the school on 28th Avenue is reserved for bus traffic and drivers must park cars in appropriate areas. Please do not use the Odyssey parking lot for drop-off or pick-up. For the safety of everyone, please drive slowly through all sections of the neighborhood.

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

In order for students to receive the full benefit of the WCE education, daily attendance is the first and most important step. The school calendar is published and distributed before the commencement of the school year and parents are asked to schedule any travel within the dates that classes are not in session. Please notify the school if your child will be absent or tardy by phoning the school attendance line at (720)424-3168. This should be done each day a child is absent.

WCE has an attendance and tardy policy in accordance with the Colorado School Attendance Law and Denver Public Schools “Denver Plan.” These guidelines allow for roughly 10 absences during the course of a school year or in other-words, a 97% attendance rate. Every month the school social worker reviews student attendance and will send letters to parents for those students whose absences are excessive. The definition of excessive changes throughout the school year based on number of school days but parents can expect to receive the first letter after 5 absences or tardies.

Once a child’s absences have reached a level of concern, which is currently 10 absences/tardies or more (please note that this is outside of medical or family emergencies), an attendance contract must be completed with the school social worker. This will outline attendance expectations as well as the additional requirement of a doctors’ note for any absence of two days or more.

If absences are chronic, excessive, unexcused, or otherwise of concern a child and their family will be referred to truancy court where the court will mandate your child’s attendance. This mandate is quite serious and will follow the child for the remainder of their education.

A few other things to note are: A school principal can ‘un-excuse’ any parent excused absence if a student has become truant. Excessive tardies and early withdrawals are also subject to truancy law.

If it is necessary to pick up your child from school during the school day, please go to the office to sign out your child. Teachers are instructed not to release children from the classroom or playground without authorization from the office. This procedure is followed to protect your child and to hold classroom interruptions to a minimum. A child will not be released to anyone who is not on the emergency card or to anyone under 18 years of age, unless the school's office has been notified in writing or by phone by the parent. A doctor's note may be required if absences or early withdrawals are deemed excessive.

## BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students who live at least one mile from the school are entitled to school bus transportation by DPS. The routes are set by the district and any questions concerning this service should be directed to its transportation office. For the safety of each child it is always a good idea to walk your children to and from the bus stops. Younger children should always be escorted or picked up by an adult or responsible sibling. For information regarding late buses, or any other bus questions, call the parent hotline number at (303)825-2611

Please report any problems, concerns or questions to the school office.

## CAFETERIA

Students have the option of bringing their own lunch to school or purchasing milk or a hot lunch. Lunch will be available for \$1.40 (\$0.40 for students who qualify for reduced lunch). Parents may access their student’s account by logging on to [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com) ; you will need to know the id number for your child. Checks should be made payable to WCE Lunchroom or parents can deposit into account. Each child is responsible for his/her own lunch money. If the money is lost or forgotten, a lunch will be provided but the child must repay the lunchroom manager the following day. A child is only allowed 2 charges before an alternative meal (peanut butter or cheese sandwich,

fruit and drink) will be served. Please write the child's name on the sack or lunch box. Students are expected to eat a healthy, balanced breakfast and lunch. Soft drinks are not allowed in the WCE lunchroom.

Menu: [www.dpsk12.org/lunchmenu](http://www.dpsk12.org/lunchmenu)

Nutritional Information: [www.foodservices.dpsk12.org](http://www.foodservices.dpsk12.org)

## CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Denver Public Schools will make a decision in the early morning about closing schools or putting the Storm Schedule in effect. Listen to the local television and radio stations for the announcement. KOA 850 or KBNA 1220 are the official announcement stations for school closing information. When DPS elementary schools are put on the storm schedule, bus pick up times at the bus stops are delayed about one half hour. School will start at the regular time for students who do not ride DPS school busses. In the unusual circumstance where school must be canceled during the school day, parents and/or guardians will be notified immediately. The information on the Emergency Form on file in the office will be used, and administrators and teachers will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision at home before releasing them from school. Please make sure your emergency contact numbers are kept up to date to ensure timely contact with you during the school day.

## CELL PHONES

WCE prohibits students the use and carrying of cell phones during the school day. Cell phones create interference with instruction and may impede school safety in a real emergency.

If you wish your child to have a cell phone in his/her possession for contacting you after school, your child must bring the cell phone to the office at the beginning of the school day. The child is responsible for picking up the phone at the end of the day.

When a child is out of compliance with this policy, cell phones will be confiscated. It will then be necessary for the parent to come to school to regain possession of the cell phone.

## CLASS PLACEMENT PROCESS

Westerly Creeks seeks to hire and retain the best teachers in the district. Children will be placed by staff according to individual and class balancing needs. Assigning students to classes is most effectively done by our classroom teachers who have been working with the students daily in an educational setting. Teachers consider the learning styles and academic needs of the returning students and assign them to the different classrooms at the next grade level. This process is done with care for and utmost consideration of each child's academic and social/emotional needs. It takes careful consideration of many factors to create equitably balanced classrooms in terms of academic needs, behavior, gender, ethnicity, and number of students.

If you feel that your child requires unique consideration as these decisions are made, the principal will receive letters regarding your child's placement for the following year. Parents will be expected to spend at least 30 minutes in each grade level class. A letter must be submitted and must contain a clear statement about why the requested teacher is a better educational match for the child's needs. A letter may not be e-mailed and must be delivered directly to the principal by the deadline (announced

each spring.) This is not a guarantee that requests will be honored, but it will be taken into consideration. A late request will not be considered due to the amount of work that will already have been completed.

\*Class lists are subject to change by WCE administrative staff.

## COMPUTER/INTERNET

All parents and students sign an acceptable Use Agreement governing computer use at WCE. Failure to comply with any or all of this policy will result in a loss of any or all computer use privileges.

## CONDUCT

WCE is a place of learning. In order to achieve this purpose, high standards of conduct are expected. These standards are based on mutual respect and responsibility--for oneself, toward classmates, adults and for property. Learning these standards will enable students to develop self-discipline, self-esteem and problem solving skills. Students must be responsible and accept consequences for their behavior. Gentle reminders and specific behaviors learning opportunities are part of our learning community. Consequences may range from a reminder, to a written warning, to a detention, or an in-school suspension.

Our discipline policy has been designed to help our students learn self-control and discipline in a constructive way.

## CONTACTING THE SCHOOL

The school telephone number is (303) 322-5877. A secretary is on duty from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30. Outside of those hours, messages are recorded on an answering machine. The number for Kaleidoscope Corner is (720) 424.8291. Please call this number directly if your student in Kaleidoscope Corner.

## DIRECTORY

The PTA publishes a full school directory on an annual basis. Each student's name, address, parent/guardian name(s), telephone number (if applicable), and email addresses are listed. In addition there is a student name listing by grade, a listing of the administration, faculty, staff, Parent Teacher Association. The Directory is free for all members of the PTA or can be purchased for \$15.00.

## DRESS CODE

Students should come to school looking clean, neat and dressed in a manner that is appropriate and not distracting. Hats are not to be worn inside the school. The Denver Board of Education passed a "Zero Gang Tolerance" policy in 1992 which states that no clothing associated with gangs, including baseball caps, are to be allowed in any DPS school building.

- Students should dress for weather - especially on field trip days.
- Please label all outer garments and your child's backpack with their full name.

## EARLY DISMISSAL

It is strongly recommended that all appointments and extracurricular activities be scheduled outside school hours as the loss of class time is detrimental to the student. In the event that the occasional appointment cannot be so scheduled, a note should be sent to school with the student requesting early dismissal for that day and giving the time that the parent will pick up the student. Parents must meet their children in the office and officially sign them out of school. Students are responsible for handing in all work due in the classes they will miss, and for completing any assignments for the following day.

Should early dismissal become necessary because of an illness or accident in school, the nurse/office will contact that parent or appropriate designee on the Emergency Information Form. A parent or emergency contact person must sign the student out of school as outlined above.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

An Emergency Information Form is kept on file in the office.

Please notify the school office if there is any change in address, telephone number, place of employment, or emergency contact person so that we may be in contact with you at any time if necessary. It is very important for the safety and well being of your child that you keep this information current. When a parent or responsible adult cannot be contacted, the school may call the Denver Police and/or Office of Social Services.

## FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are required by law and are important practice in the event that an actual emergency should occur. Students learn the evacuation path established for each room they occupy and conduct rules during these safety drills are strictly enforced. All building occupants must move silently and in an orderly fashion to a specified area where they remain until instructed to return to the building. All schools practice at least one fire drill a month and a lock down and shelter in place each semester. Please refer to the DPS Emergency Response and Crisis Management pamphlet for a complete understanding of the drills.

In case of an evacuation WCE students will be taken to William Roberts School 2100 Akron Way Denver, CO 80238. William Roberts School is located at the intersection of Montview Boulevard and Yosemite Street.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is considered an integral part of the educational program through which WCE students are encouraged to become independent learners. Whether practicing a concept or skill learned in class, doing research for a project, having time to think and write creatively, assimilating new material on an individual basis, or reading a book of choice, the work should be done carefully and to the best of one's ability. It is beneficial to your child's education to show an interest in his/her studies by

reviewing materials and assignments brought home. In the event of an absence, all homework and class work is expected to be completed in a timely manner.

## FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

Classroom learning takes on a whole new meaning when put in the context of professional performance, firsthand discovery and experiences shared with experts. Field trips are a way of taking the classroom into the community and are therefore regarded as an integral part of the educational experience. These trips also serve to heighten community awareness, involvement, appreciation, and commitment. Students of all ages travel to museums, theaters, farms, historical sites, government buildings, and/or concert halls. Parents are often asked to act as chaperones, especially for outings involving the younger students. Please be aware that there may be times where the school may ask for a nominal fee for your child to attend the excursion. Often times the venue of which the grade level or class is attending needs to have the money in advance. Please be prompt in sending the money. Talk to your child's teacher if there is a question or concern.

## KALEIDOSCOPE CORNER

Kaleidoscope Corner is a licensed child care program offered at select Denver Public Schools to children ECE (age 3) through 5th grade (age 14). Select Kaleidoscope Corner sites serve children \*3 to 12 years of age. In 1984, Denver Community School developed this successful program. Their purpose is to provide high quality educational, recreational and cultural opportunities for children. Kaleidoscope Corner's philosophy is to provide a creative, safe and caring environment for children before and after the regular school day. They believe that choice is essential for children's growth and happiness. They teach children to solve their own problems by modeling correct behavior and emphasizing clear conduct guidelines. Their child care centers are staffed with qualified professionals trained in the areas of CPR, First Aid, activity planning and behavior management. Kaleidoscope Corner operates Monday-Friday with the following program components and hours of operation.  
Early Risers: 6:30 a.m. until School start time  
After School: School release time until 6 p.m.

## LOST AND FOUND

Please check the lost and found area that is located underneath the stairwell in the main lobby. Also, please put your child's name on coats, mittens, gloves, lunch-boxes and water bottles. All lost items will be bagged and donated at the end of each semester.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Westerly Creek parents are essential to the success of our school. Parents enrich our school with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. In accordance with the Westerly Creek Elementary School Improvement Plan, "Westerly Creek will increase the level of parent engagement in students' learning and in their involvement in school functions."

Just as we have high expectations for our Westerly Creek staff and students, we have the same expectations for parental involvement. One of the most important aspects of involvement is communication between the school and the family. As a parent, it is your responsibility to read and manage communications from the staff, room parents, and PTA. The teachers will provide a weekly correspondence about classroom activities, important dates, and needed classroom help. The PTA will send a weekly update through email or paper copy outlining school activities, fundraising events, meeting reminders, important dates, and volunteer opportunities. Periodically, you will receive messages from your room parent letting you know about upcoming classroom events and needed help. If you feel you are not getting the information you need, please contact your room parent, let them know so improvements can be made.

I strongly encourage all parents to sign up for a “job.” Each class has a Classroom Parent that will coordinate job assignments. The list of available jobs and a brief description of each is located on the PTA website <http://westerlycreekpta.com> .

## RECESS

Students go outside every day for recess. Please make sure that they are dressed appropriately to be outside for 30 minutes at a time. We are all aware how fast the weather in Colorado can change so it would be great if they always have access to a hat, pair of gloves and boots in their backpack. The sun is also very intense in Colorado; please make sure your student has sunscreen applied before coming to school.

## SCHOOL HOURS

ECE and ½ day kindergarten sessions are from 9:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. Full day ECE, Kindergarten through 2nd grade classes are in session between 9:00 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. Students are not to arrive before 8:45 a.m. There is NO supervision for students or a place for them to wait until 8:45 a.m. Students must be picked up promptly after the 3:45 dismissal bell. They may not stay and play on the playground, unless a parent or guardian supervises them.

## SCHOOL NURSE

WCE’s school nurse is in the building two days a week. If a child becomes ill or injured at school, he/she will receive temporary care and first aid, and the parent will be notified immediately so that the child may be picked up. Please be sure an accurate emergency phone number is on file! Medication-Denver Public School Policy, in accordance with state law, states that medication may be dispensed with physician and parent/guardian authorizations at school. The parent must provide the medication in a separate prescription bottle that stays at school. The bottle must have a prescription label clearly stating the student's name, doctor's name, name of the medication, dosage and time(s) to be taken. Medication requiring three doses a day should be given before school, after school and at bedtime. Medication requiring four doses a day may necessitate giving one dose at school.

ALL medication must be turned into the office and not carried around by students. Please do not send pills or capsules in plastic bags or over-the-counter medications such as cold pills, Tylenol and cough

drops. Medications will be stored and locked in the school office and dispensed by the office staff. The student is responsible for going to the office/clinic to obtain his/her medication.

Immunizations-Colorado state law requires all students to be fully immunized when entering school. Records must be available showing dates of all immunizations:

#### REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

- Five DPT
- Four Polio
- Two MMR
- Three doses of Hepatitis B for ECE-3rd grade
- One Varicella for Kindergarten

#### SNACK

Classes have a designated snack time each morning. Snacks need to be nutritious. Please do not send foods high in fat or sugar content. A recommended snack list is provided.

If your child has a medical need for a snack, you will need to provide a statement from your doctor and the teacher will help your child work out a routine.

#### RECOMMENDED SNACKS

No snacks should require preparation, cutting, peeling or the use of utensils.

- Any fresh fruit ready prepared
- Any fresh vegetables ready prepared
- Granola bars
- Yogurt sticks
- Cheese sticks
- Raisins
- Apple sauce
- Rice crackers

#### TOBACCO FREE DISTRICT

Denver Public Schools is a tobacco free district. No tobacco products are allowed on school grounds.

#### TOILET TRAINING

All students must be completely toilet trained prior to beginning school. Being toilet trained requires the following:

- Children are aware of their need to use the bathroom and can recognize this in a timely manner to make it to the bathroom.
- Children are able to take care of all their toilet needs independently. This includes wiping themselves and being able to completely change on their own should an accident occur.
- Disposable pull-up pants may not be worn at any time and will not be kept in the classroom.

· When a child is toilet trained, we understand that an accident (an untimely recognition of need to use bathroom) may still occur, however, we do not consider it toilet trained if it occurs more often than every *few months*.

In the event of an accidental wetting, children will need to independently change themselves into dry clothes provided by the parent. Please wash and return these clothes as soon as possible. In the event of a bowel accident, parents will be called to change their child. In the event that a child is not fully toilet trained and a wetting or bowel accident occurs 2 times within a 2 week period, monthly tuition may be paid in order to hold a student's place in the class. The child will not be allowed to attend school until he/she is able to successfully take care of his/her toilet needs independently. If absolutely necessary, staff members will wear latex gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids as a safety precaution.

## TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Toys, athletic equipment, gadgets, electronic devices, cell phones and makeup are not to be brought to school without teacher permission. If permitted, they need to be clearly marked with the student's name. Please be aware that we will not assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen materials.

## WHEELS AT SCHOOL

The school has a limited number of bike racks. If your child rides a bike to school, he/she is responsible for making sure the bike is properly locked up. Bicycles must be "walked" on school grounds. Students should ask their teacher where their scooters should be stored. Skateboards and rollerblades are not to be used on school grounds.

Parents should encourage children to follow all safety rules established for pedestrians. This emphasis on safety is also a concern of the school's staff, and is an important part of our instructional program.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

- Westerly Creek Elementary School Office Telephone (303) 322-5877
- FAX to WCE Office (720) 424-3185
- WCE Web Page <http://westerlycreek.dpsk12.org/>
- WCE PTA Web Page <http://westerlycreekpta.com>
- Attendance Line (available 24 hours per day) (720) 424-3168
- DPS Bus Transportation (303) 825-2611
- Kaleidoscope Corner (on site) (720) 424.8176
- Kaleidoscope Corner (main office) (720) 424-8291
- DPS Main Office (720) 423-3200
- DPS Web Page [www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org)
- School Board (720) 423-3210