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Core Values:

Together we will RESPECT, EXCEL, and INSPIRE.

Vision Statement:

Through collaboration and continuous learning, West Side Elementary School will be a place of excellence where all students are engaged in high quality, real-world learning. A professional and highly motivated staff, in partnership with parents, will encourage children to achieve their full potential and become responsible citizens who are lifelong learners.

Mission Statement:

West Side strives to guarantee each child a superior education through high-quality, integrated learning experiences.

HOME OF THE WILDCATS

Visit our website at <https://www.acpsmd.org/Domain/357> for school calendar information, announcements, and Title I news!

Parents and Students,

On behalf of the staff at West Side Elementary School, I welcome you to the 2025 - 2026 school year!

The elementary years are an exciting time as together we watch your child grow and mature with each passing grade. This can also be a time for many questions from parents and students about school policies and procedures. With that thought in mind, we have created this handbook to provide you with information that will affect you and your student during this school year. Teachers will be reviewing this information with your child during the first days of school, and we encourage you to review the booklet with them as well.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to collaborating with you this year as we work together to provide an outstanding educational experience for your child!

Jill Hartsfield
Principal



Emergency Contact Information

Each student will receive emergency forms, one for the school office, and one for the nurse. Please return all forms to the school as soon as possible. If you have changes to your information, such as employer, phone numbers, address, or emergency contacts at any time during the school year, please notify the school immediately!

It is essential that your correct address and phone numbers be on file in the office. If you receive mail through a post office box, please be sure to include your physical address as well. Please be sure to list several alternate contacts in the event of an emergency. You may change these contacts at any time during the year, but please contact the office if any of their contact information changes.

School Nurse Program



West Wide hopes you appreciate the contacts that our school nurse, Mrs. Christina Resh will make during the school year. She will assist you in getting connected with appropriate medical help and will do everything possible to help your

child return to the classroom in the event of illness. Please return the pink emergency card to school as soon as possible. Also, please keep in mind that injuries and illnesses that occur at home should be treated by the family physician or the hospital emergency room—not the school nurse, but please provide the school nurse with any doctor's orders when a child needs treatment at school.

The health nurse can provide 2 doses of Acetaminophen per month with a completed "Over the Counter Medication Form." If your child requires any type of medication, including cough drops, Benadryl, or prescription drugs, etc. a "Physician's Authorization Form" **must** be completed by your physician. We legally cannot, and will not, administer any medications without the complete written instructions from the prescribing physician. Medication must be received in its original bottle from the parent or guardian.

STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BRING MEDICATIONS TO SCHOOL!

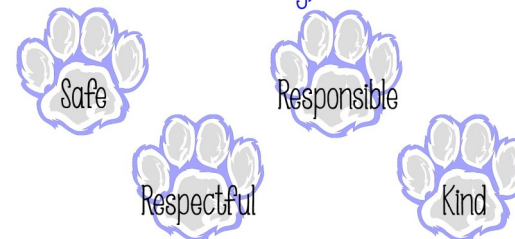
Student Behavior

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEM (PBIS)

West Side's discipline approach is to emphasize and recognize the proper behavior of our students. This can be done through a variety of methods:

- **CLEAR EXPECTATIONS IN ALL SETTINGS**—Staff members teach students what it "looks like" to BE SAFE, RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, AND KIND in all areas of the school as well as the playground.

At West Side Elementary, We "PAWS" to Be...



School Lunch and Breakfast

Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria between 8:15 and 8:40 a.m. Cost for breakfast is \$1.40.



ELEMENTARY LUNCH SHIFTS

Grades PK, K and 2	Grades 1 and 3	Grades 4 and 5
11:00 to 11:30 am	11:40 to 12:10 pm	12:10 to 12:40 pm



NOTE: Parents may **NOT** bring their child a lunch from local restaurants

DEPOSITING MONEY INTO ACCOUNT—Cash or check payments are accepted; however, check or online payments through PayPAMS are recommended. PayPAMS is an online account management system that offers a secure and convenient way to prepay for student's meals online, setup automatic payments, view balances and account history, and receive balance notifications. For more information, visit the ACPS website (www.acpsmd.org) and click on the PayPAMS link.

If depositing money onto your child's account by check, please put the student's name and account number on the memo line. If your child's account is in the negative, you will be notified to make a payment. If you have any questions, please contact Angel Darr, cafeteria manager, at 301-724-4112.

Starting during the 2024—2025 school year in all Allegany County Public Schools, breakfast and lunch are free to ALL students. This is because of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a USDA program that allows low-income schools to offer meals to all students at no cost and without requiring applications from families. Free/Reduced applications will no longer be distributed to households at the beginning of the year or throughout the school year as they are not needed to obtain a free meal.

Families can continue to use PayPAMS to pay for extra items (ala carte) in the cafeteria that are not part of the free meal offered to students.

Morning Procedures

In the mornings, students are not permitted in the building before 8:15 a.m., as that time has been established as the beginning of the teachers' workday, and adults are not available to supervise until after that time. The staff at West Side assumes no liability should students be dropped off prior to 8:15 a.m.

Breakfast is served between 8:15 and 8:40 a.m. Students eating breakfast should arrive in time to eat breakfast and be seated in the classroom by 8:45 a.m. **Any student not in the classroom at 8:45 will be marked as tardy.**

Carpool students: Although students are strongly encouraged to ride the school bus if possible, students arriving at school by car should be dropped off in the front circle between 8:15 and 8:40 a.m. Please remain in your vehicles. Staff will assist students into the building each morning.

Tardies: You are reminded that students arriving after 8:45 a.m. are considered tardy, and will need to be signed in by a parent/guardian in the school office. They will then receive a tardy slip to be admitted into the classroom. One of our school's goals is to have an outstanding attendance rating. To do so, students are expected to be in school unless illness or other valid reasons prevent them from attending. If you have difficulty getting your student to school, please contact the school or Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW) to assist you. We will try to help you keep your child having an outstanding attendance record. Students with perfect attendance are recognized at the end of each marking period.



End of the Day Procedures

Instruction occurs daily until 3:15 p.m. Please try not to pick students up early unless absolutely necessary, so they do not miss valuable instruction time.

PARENT PICKUP: Students who carpool will be dismissed immediately following afternoon announcements. Parents are to line up in the back of the school to retrieve their child. For the safety of all of our students, do not pull out of line to go around other cars unless otherwise directed.

Greene St Walkers: Students are dismissed following carpool students. Students will be picked up from the playground area. Students grades 1-5 are allowed to walk home after teachers cross them at the stop light on the corner of Allegany and Greene St.

BUS DISMISSAL: Bus students are dismissed following Greene St Walkers, at 3:25 p.m. Bus students are to go to the gym and wait for their bus number to be called.

Corresponding with the School

COMMUNICATION FOLDERS—Most correspondence from the school office and in the classroom will be sent home with students via the communicator folder. This will help you stay informed about upcoming events at the school.



ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOKS—Assignment notebooks are sent home daily in grades 1-5. Each evening, please check off and sign the notebook. This is a great way to correspond with your child's teacher, schedule a conference, or arrange a phone call to discuss any issues. We ask that you take a few moments each evening to evaluate your child's progress and realize the gifts they possess!

DISMISSAL CHANGES/APPOINTMENTS—If your child will be leaving the school by a different method of transportation, please notify the office in writing at the beginning of the school day. Although we understand that last-minute changes are unavoidable, we ask that no dismissal changes are made after 1:30 p.m. each day. Dismissal is a very busy time, and may cause miscommunication. We want your child to arrive home safely each day.

ABSENCES—Regular school attendance is important for success! All absences, tardiness, early dismissals, or any change in the regular daily program of your student must be explained in a written note to the school office. In addition, students are responsible for completing all missed assignments. Please review the attendance policy that can be found on the ACPS website (www.acpsmd.org). It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the school with a written reason for the absence on the day your child returns to school. Notes should include the child's name, date, reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature. If your child visits the doctor, please obtain a note from their office to send in with your child upon their return to school.



Visiting the School



All persons entering an Allegany County school at any time are required by county policy to check in at the school office, regardless of the nature of the visit. This includes, but is not limited to, picking up children for appointments, volunteering in the classrooms, depositing money into your child's lunch account, or attending an event. Parents are not to enter teaching areas without approval from the office. If you are picking your child up before 3:15 p.m., remember to sign them out in the office.

Our new visitor sign-in program requires that all visitors have their driver's license or photo identification scanned into our database. This change in visitor check-ins will help to keep our school a safe, secure environment for our students and staff.

Parties

If your child is having a birthday party outside of the school setting, we ask that invitations not be distributed in school unless every child in class is invited. This will spare hurt feelings. Parties during school time are not permitted due to the loss of instructional time.



Student Attire

In regard to student dress, we ask that students wear shoes that are safe for playing on the playground and walking up and down stairs. As a result, no flip-flops are allowed, unless the shoes have a strap across the back. Also, students should always have a jacket or sweater available in case of quick weather changes. It is helpful to label your child's jackets in case they get misplaced. In warm weather, students are not permitted to wear shirts with spaghetti straps, and all shorts should be at least fingertip length. During cold weather months, (November 15 - March 1) students may not wear shorts or other summer apparel. Any clothing depicting alcohol, drugs, or weapons are prohibited. We thank you for your support with making your child's learning environment conducive to safety and learning!