

West Elementary Student Handbook 2024-2025



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wes.hcboe.net

Mr. Brandon Olson, Principal

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“Dream it. Believe it, and Achieve it.”

Mission Statement

It is our mission to create a total educational experience that allows children to excel academically, grow emotionally and socially, and become lifelong learners who demonstrate useful decision-making skills to become productive citizens in a changing global society.

Common Beliefs

We believe that all students can learn, achieve, and succeed.

We believe students learn in different ways and should be engaged in instruction that utilizes research-based curricula that ensures success for all.

We believe all students should develop a healthy self-concept and social relationships.

We believe the active participation, communication, and support of our community is vital to advance our mission.

Warrior Expectations and Goals

Prepared

Respect

Integrity

Develop Leadership

Ensure Safety of All



School Hours

Doors open for students at 7:10 a.m. Students may choose to eat breakfast from 7:10-7:45. All students will be dismissed from the gym and cafeteria at 7:45 to go to their classrooms. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Any student who enters the building after 8:00 a.m. must report to the office and get a tardy slip before entering the classroom. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m.. All parents/visitors must sign in at the office and have an appointment before entering the learning area. Please understand that we must protect our instructional time and school structure.

Parent Communication

Communication between the school and home is vital to student success. Students in K-5 have a parent communication folder. Students in grades K and 1 bring their folders home daily. Students in grades 2-5 bring their folders home each Thursday. Students in grades 2-5 will have a student planner that will come home daily. Please check the folder/planner daily for important information and notes. Important notes from the school will be copied on yellow paper. Parent Portal is available to check students' attendance and grades. ClassTag is also available. School Messenger allows the school district to send you text/voice messages. This service allows for teachers and coaches to send you text messages.

Cafeteria

Students receive a free, healthy breakfast every day, and they may purchase a lunch each day. Breakfast is served from 7:10 a.m. until 7:45 a.m. each morning.

Parents are expected to keep up with students' accounts in the cafeteria. Hamblen County Board Policy does not allow students to charge lunch. In emergency situations only, a student may be allowed to charge up to 3 days for lunch.



After Labor Day, parents/grandparents/guardians are invited to eat lunch with students, unless otherwise noted. If you plan to eat lunch with your child, you will need to contact the school office by 8:30 a.m. to determine vacancy in the lunchroom and to order a hot lunch for \$5.00. If you wish to request a meal, you must contact the school office the morning of your visit no later than 8:30 a.m. in order for lunch to be prepared for you. Calls received after 8:30 a.m. and visitors showing up without prior administrative approval will be turned away until the next available date. Due to seating constraints, no more than 2 visitors per grade-level will be permitted in the cafeteria. Any parent wanting to eat lunch at school with his/her child will be expected to show a photo ID and must be on the approved parent/guardian list. No other students are allowed to eat with guests. Restaurant food is not allowed. Students are not permitted to have guests for breakfast.

Afternoon Dismissal

Each school year you mark how your child will go home on the online registration form. This is your child's 'usual' way to get home. If you need to change their "usual" way home, a note must be sent or a phone call to the school office must be made. If we do not receive a note or phone call, they will be sent home their 'usual' way. The office will verify all notes sent from home.

Bus Riders

Students will only be allowed to exit the bus at their designated stop. If you need to make a change in where your child will get off the bus, please contact the school office.

Bus drivers will not accept notes from parents. These must be sent to the school office for confirmation.

Walkers

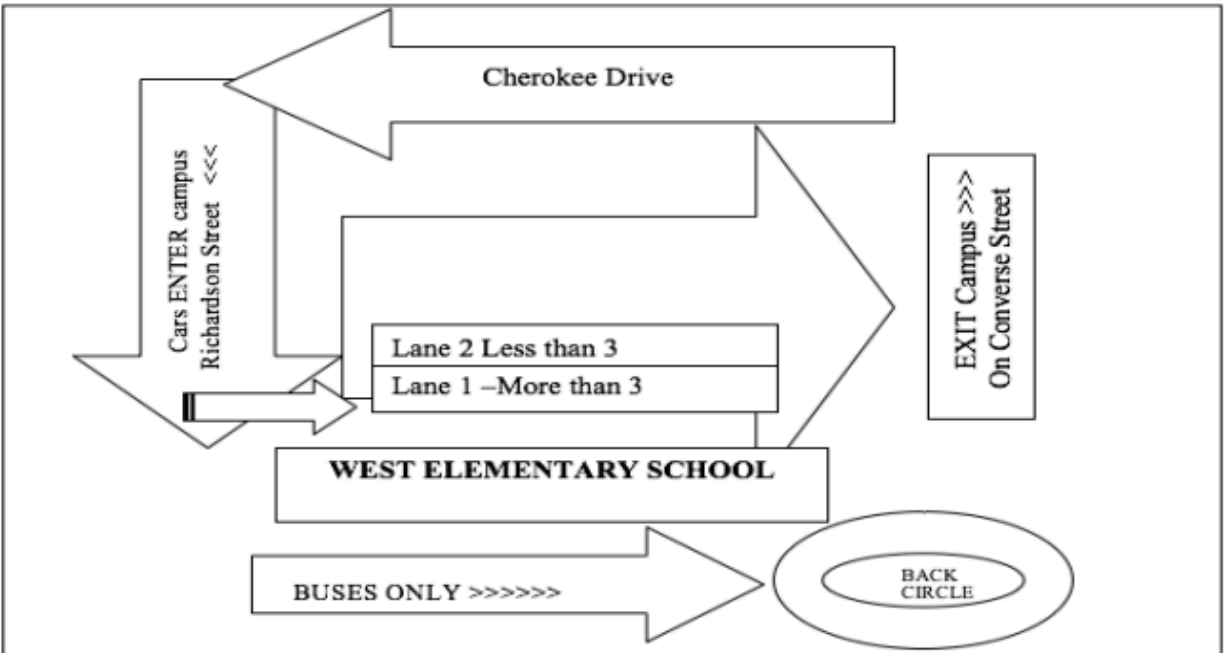
Students who walk home will be dismissed at 3:05. Only those students who walk to their homes should be walkers.



Car Riders

- Car riders are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. All car riders must be picked up by 3:20. If you are unable to be here by 3:20, you can enroll your student into after school care provided by ESP, or they can ride a bus home. You may access the ESP application online at <https://register.runsandbox.com/Register/?form=fd494d9c-ec2b-44f4-9280-e7802a495dcb>
- **Display your West Elementary car tag from your rear-view mirror, and leave it hanging until your child is loaded in the car.** This identifies you as an authorized person to pick up a student. **If you do not have a car tag displayed, you will be asked to park and go into the school to sign your child out.** This is for your child's safety. These tags are changed each year. Be sure to use the one that is issued for the current school year.
- Please do not use your cell phone while in line.
- For safer loading, if you are loading 3 or more children use the inside lane.
- **Parents should stay in your vehicle and wait for your child to be dismissed with car riders at 3:00.** Please do not wait in the office, foyer, or front steps for your child. If you need to pick your child up early, please do so before 2:45. This is for safety reasons and to reduce confusion at dismissal.

Please follow the traffic patterns that are set up by school officials. All cars are to enter the campus from Richardson Street, and exit down Converse Street. No cars are allowed to enter the road at the rear of the building until after 3:45. All car riders will be in the FRONT of the school. Please follow the traffic pattern as shown.



Bus Transportation

State law does not require school bus transportation, but it is a privilege extended to students by the department of education. Misconduct on the bus endangers safety and will result in a loss of this privilege.

First Offense:	Warning
Second Offense:	Five days off the bus
Third Offense:	Fifteen days off the bus
Fourth Offense:	Thirty Days off the bus
Fifth Offense:	One calendar year off the bus

Students are expected to remain seated while the bus is in motion and behave appropriately. Parents are responsible for the transportation of their child in the event a child is suspended from the bus.



Pre-K drop off/pickup

Pre-K drop off begins at 7:30 a.m. Pre-K will drop in their designated area only. Pre-K students will be loaded at 2:40 p.m. in the back circle. Teachers will walk and load students in cars. Please remain inside of your cars to allow for faster dismissal. All Pre-K students should be picked up by 2:50 p.m. Parents are required to sign in/out daily. Failure to pick up your student starting at 2:55pm may result in a fine of \$5, and will be assessed \$5 for every additional 10 minutes late thereafter.

Attendance

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences are classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or designee in charge of attendance. When a student is absent, the parent or guardian shall contact the school. Upon return to the school, the student must present a note signed by the parent/guardian. The principal or attendance designee will determine if student notes are valid.

A student is excused for the day or days absent, but not from the responsibility for the material covered in class. It is therefore the responsibility of the student, not the teacher, for make-up work in all subject matters covered during the absence.

Absences shall be excused for:

1. Personal illness: parent/guardian signed note shall be accepted for five (5) days for each semester; after five (5) days a physician statement shall be required.
2. Death in the immediate family; not to exceed three (3) days.
3. Illness of parent/guardian requiring temporary help; physician's statement required.
4. Recognized religious holidays.
5. Court summons; only time actually in court shall be excused with court excuse.
6. Absences approved by the principal (if, after consulting with the parent/guardian, the principal agrees that the absence is legitimate, the absence may be excused).



When a student returns to school following an absence, the student MUST bring a signed note by the parent/doctor. Without a note, the absence will be classified as unexcused.

A student must be present for a minimum of half of the school day to be counted present for the entire day. Therefore, a student must be present until 11:30 a.m. in order for the day to count.

**When a student has accrued 3 unexcused absences, the principal or attendance coordinator will send a letter. At 4 unexcused absences, the attendance coordinator will contact parents and a contract will be set up. Continuous absences are subject to be reviewed by the Attendance Committee and a possible referral to court.

Excused and Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals

Students are considered tardy if they arrive at school after the bell rings at 8:00, or are signed out before 3:00.

1. Excused tardies/early dismissals
 - a. Late Bus
 - b. Illness with a doctor's note
 - c. Death in the family
 - d. Religious Holiday
 - e. Medical/dental appointments (with a doctor's note)

2. Unexcused tardies/early dismissals
 - a. Tardy #3 Parent contact by mail
 - b. Tardy #6 Loss of perfect attendance, parent contact by attendance designee
 - c. Tardy #10 referral to Attendance Review Committee



If you sign your child out of school early, it is considered an early dismissal. If you need to pick your child up early for an appointment, please do so before 2:45 to avoid traffic and confusion at dismissal. If it is after 2:45, you will need to be in the car line, or meet your child at their regular bus stop. Excessive unexcused early dismissals are included in Hamblen County's Attendance Policy and have consequences. Please do not sign your child out of school early to avoid waiting in the car line.

Athletics

West Elementary School offers both boys and girls' basketball and cheerleading. Games begin in November. Students who desire to try out for basketball and cheerleading must have an overall C average and no failing grades in the core academic areas. WES students must maintain these academic standards. An annual physical is required to try out for athletics at WES.

School Events

Students are encouraged to attend school events such as basketball games and school programs. Students must be accompanied by an adult and follow school rules while in attendance.

Organizations

4-H Club

Every fourth and fifth grade student has the opportunity to join the 4-H Club. The mission of 4-H is to empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. Membership is free and optional. The students will meet once a month to work on projects/speech contests, baking and other science/consumer related curriculum.

Beta Club

Beta is an organization based on academic achievement, grades, and behavior. Fifth grade students are eligible to join this club. The mission of Beta Club is to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, service, and leadership among students.



Band

Fifth grade students have the opportunity to participate in band. Band meets twice a week during school hours. This program is for students to explore their interests in musical instruments. Students will perform in concerts and build a foundation for participation in band classes in middle school. Students are required to provide their own instrument. Participation is optional.

Safety Patrol

AAA is the supporting sponsor of Safety Patrol. Safety Patrol is a program that has been helping students since 1920. Students who participate in safety patrol gain safety awareness, leadership skills, teamwork, citizenship, and respect for authority figures. Students who are selected to participate will be notified. Membership is optional. There is no cost for students to join.

Science Club

Science Club provides students the opportunity to learn all things science related in a more relaxed, inquiry-based, and informal setting. Generally, the Science Club will meet twice a month. Parents/Guardians must provide transportation from the Science Club.

Art Club

The purpose of Art Club is to provide students who have an interest in art, an opportunity to explore art and craft forms beyond what is offered in the curriculum. Art Club typically meets twice a month. Parents/Guardians must provide transportation from the Art Club.

Code Force

The purpose of Code Force is to give students an introduction to the basics of designing, building, and coding robots. Math and science principles are included in the program to assist students in learning real world applications. Code Force typically meets once a week. Parents must provide transportation from meetings.



Soccer Club

The purpose of Soccer Club is to provide students, in grades 3-5, the opportunity to improve upon and showcase their soccer skills. It is available for any student who shows an interest in the sport of soccer. We meet once a week during a fall and spring season. A valid sports physical is required to participate. Parents/Guardians must provide transportation from Soccer Club.

Classroom Celebrations

We do not have birthday parties in the classroom. Parents may call for permission from the office to bring in celebratory items. All outside food should be store bought, including cupcakes. Please make sure to reach out to your student's teacher about class allergies before purchasing any items.

Conferences

Parent conferences are very important to the success of students. The school or parent may call or write to request a meeting at any time. Please make an appointment with the teacher at least 24 hours prior to your requested visit. Teachers may not be available to meet every day or during instructional time. School-wide conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring.

Custody Issues

Should there be a change in normal custodial arrangements for your child/children, it is imperative the principal be informed as soon as possible. A legal copy signed by the judge must be included in the documentation with custodial rights. A parenting plan will be kept on file in the office.

Discipline

The Hamblen County School System uses a system-wide discipline plan, called Assertive Discipline, which will afford every student guidance in making good decisions about their behavior, and thus an opportunity to learn in a positive, nurturing



classroom environment. The plan below outlines our classroom rules and consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Any threat to a staff member or another student will be taken seriously.

Classroom Rules

1. Follow directions the first time given.
2. Be prepared and ready to work with all materials.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Remain seated until given permission to get up.
5. Be respectful to others and the learning environment.

To encourage students to follow the classroom rules, teachers reinforce appropriate behavior with praise, positive notes, messages, phone calls, special privileges, Shout Outs, and other rewards.

Severe Clause: Students may be sent immediately to the principal for fighting profanity, vandalism, stealing, or refusal to follow teacher's instructions, to name a few. The principal may assign loss of privileges, detention, or suspension. Detentions will be assigned up to one hour and parents may be required to pick up their child at the end of detention. We believe that no student has the right to prevent any teacher from teaching, or to prevent any other student from learning, due to misconduct.

In severe forms of misconduct, including assault of a staff member, weapons, presence of alcohol or drugs, or repeated misbehavior disrupting the learning environment, a student may be placed in the alternative school for a minimum of 45 days or recommended for expulsion from the school.



Board Policies

Board Policies concerning student conduct are included in this handbook. Changes in board policy may occur during a school year. The public may view the Hamblen County School Board policies on the system website at www.hcboe.net

Bullying Policy

Bullying happens when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power. Power may be physical strength, social skills, verbal ability, or other resources. The teacher and the guidance counselor will try to help students who feel bullied by others. Students who commit bullying offenses will be given the opportunity to make better choices. If behavior persists, parents will be contacted and the principal may set up a conference. Bullying will not be tolerated, and the Assertive Discipline plan may be followed. Confirmation of bullying may result in punishment at the school level, and referral paperwork will be submitted to Nashville as required by law.

Students shall be provided a safe learning environment. It shall be a violation of HCBOE policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or create a hostile educational environment for another student. Harassment, bullying, and intimidation occurs if the act takes place on school grounds, at any school sponsored activity, on school provided equipment or transportation or at any official school bus stop if the act either physically harms a student or damages his/her property or knowingly places the student in reasonable fear of such, causes emotional distress to a student or students, or creates a hostile educational environment. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school sponsored event, an act of harassment, bullying, or intimidation occurs if the act is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or learning process. These acts may also take place through electronic means.

Discrimination/Harassment

Students shall be provided a learning environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment. It shall be a violation of HCBOE policy for any employee or any student to discriminate against or harass a student through



disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious in nature.

Dress Code

All pants must be hemmed and worn at the waist. Skirts, shorts, and dresses must be at least mid-thigh length. Shirts and blouses must be appropriately fitted. Tank tops are not permitted. Girls are not to wear thin strapped tops. Shoes, sneakers, and sandals with a back strap are allowed, but flip flops are not. Facial jewelry is limited to the ear with no more than 3 piercings per ear. The display of any symbol that promotes racial discord or gang activity is prohibited. The principal has the right to determine if dress is inappropriate if not specifically covered in this policy.

Electronic Devices

PreK-5 students may not possess pagers, cell phones, games, or any electronic device. Parents that share custody must arrange for items to be exchanged outside of school. Every classroom has a phone in case of an emergency. Hamblen County Policy for cell phones: Possession of a cell phone will result in an office referral, confiscation of the phone for 7 days or a fee of \$50.00 to be picked up early by a parent/guardian. Second offense is an office referral, 14 days or \$100.00 for early pick-up, and third offense results in 45 days alternative school placement.

Emergency Evacuation Instructions

Emergency drills will be practiced on a regular basis. Students are instructed to listen quietly and follow teacher instructions. In the event of an evacuation from the school, students would board buses and be taken to a safe location. The location could be another school or a place designated by the director of schools. Emergency personnel for the safety of all staff and students would block off the streets leading to the school.

Field Trips

Every student is encouraged to attend field trips. Parents will be informed with details in advance of the trip. Every student must have a signed permission slip and pay in



cash (no checks) in order to attend a trip. Permission slips and money are due three days prior to the trip. The school must meet deadlines and send information, money and counts in order to attend certain events. In some cases, parents may be asked to chaperone the trip. We do not encourage parents to take younger siblings nor allow other friends on school sponsored trips. In some cases, due to space availability, some parents may not be able to attend a field trip. All students **MUST** ride the bus on a field trip in order to be counted present at school.

Health Conditions

The school nurse takes care of students who are in need of medical attention. Any student needing to take an over the counter medicine **MUST** have a medical form from the office on file and include the original packaging/bottle. Any student needing to take prescription medication **MUST** have a medical form signed by a doctor, and medicine **MUST** be transported by parent to/from the school. Students are not to bring medication to school. A medical form may be obtained in the school office.

Students with any contagious health ailments cannot be sent to school until the condition is properly treated and no longer contagious. Any student found to have lice with nits or bugs will be sent home. A student may receive 2 excused days per year if identified with lice.

Library Privileges

Students may check out books from the library weekly. Students are responsible for taking care of the books and returning them in a timely manner. Any student who misplaces a book will not be allowed to check out another book until the lost book is found or payment is received for it.

Notification of Unsafe Schools

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under the TCA 40-38-111(g) or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under TCA 30-12-101, will be provided the opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district.



Additional information may be obtained through the Hamblen County Board of Education.

Personal Property

Certain items should be left at home. These include, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: phones, earpods, trading/game cards, CDs, radios, electronic devices, toys, make-up, rubber bands, etc. Teachers are directed to confiscate these items and take proper disciplinary action.

Parent Teacher Organization

The West Elementary PTO is an important part of our school. Many of the funds raised by the organization may be used to purchase items to support programs for the school. All interested parents are encouraged to become active members and volunteer to help out with school committees. A sign-up sheet is sent home during the first month of the school year. In the event parents and grandparents would like to help, they may call the school office or send a note to the classroom teacher. PTO membership is FREE.

Pets

Pets may not be kept in the classroom due to health and safety regulations. Parents bringing animals along for student drop-off/pick-up must keep them in the vehicle. Students are not permitted to pet animals.

Physical Education

The physical education program provides organized activities planned and directed by a certified physical education teacher. No child will be excused from participation in class unless a written note is presented or the teacher/principal feels it is necessary. Prolonged excusal from participation (in excess of 3 days) must be granted by a medical provider. Students should wear tennis shoes in gym class.

School Payments

All transactions for field trips, school fees, book orders, athletic events, and fundraising MUST be in the form of cash only. The school office does not accept checks for payments under \$25.00.



Parent Portal

Parent Portal is a great tool to keep you informed concerning your student. Parent Portal account information may be picked up in the school office. The secretary has the student username and password and it can only be given to the parent or guardian.