

Westgate Elementary School Family and Student Handbook 2019-2020 School Year



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WHO WE ARE

WESTGATE ELEMENTARY MISSION AND VISION

Westgate Mission Statement:

Our mission is to ensure that all students achieve academic excellence and develop the character to make the world a better place. To this end:

We will create a nurturing and safe learning community in which all participants are encouraged to take risks in order to reach their highest academic potential.

We will structure an academic environment in which all students achieve high standards and benchmarks while their progress is closely monitored, thus producing self-motivated learners.

In this way, we will impart the love of learning throughout our school community and pave the way towards a productive future for all.

Westgate Vision Statements:

The best way to achieve the vision of Westgate is for the staff to work together as a professional learning community. We envision a school where:

- Staff members value collaboration through ongoing grade-level and vertical team meetings;
- Staff members use assessment information to guide instruction;
- Staff members participate in professional development opportunities and continually strive to improve classroom instruction and student achievement;
- There is collective responsibility for student learning among staff, parents, and community;
- All members of the school community exhibit tolerance and respect for each other;
- Students take responsibility for their own actions and their own learning;
- Students are critical thinkers; and
- Students learn essential understandings, knowledge, and skills at each grade level

Value Statements

In order to achieve the vision of a school that functions as a professional learning community, the Westgate staff has made the following collective commitments:

- We will collaborate to establish common quarterly curriculum goals and assessments that will encourage learning across grade levels through vertical team meetings and grade level team meetings;
- We will disaggregate and analyze quarterly assessment data to drive instruction and guide the development of SMART goals. Extra time and support will be provided for students who do not achieve these goals;
- We will establish and maintain open channels of communication with students, parents, and our community to assure academic success;
- We will include staff development and share of best practices during each monthly staff meeting;
- We will develop schedules in order to provide uninterrupted math and language art blocks and EXCEL times for reteaching at each grade level. Planning time will be aligned for grade level collaboration; and
- We will have school-wide recognition of student achievement through assemblies, announcements, bulletin boards, newsletters, notes, and compliments sent home.
- Administrative Staff

SCHOOL INNOVATION and IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Westgate develops a yearly [School Improvement Plan](#) which is shared with parents and the community on the Westgate website:

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

VIRGINIA STATE STANDARDS

The required instructional program for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is defined in the Program of Studies (POS), which contains:

- Curriculum content and essential knowledge and skills for each grade level.
- Approved instructional resources.
- Assessment activities.
- Alignment with the Virginia Standards of Learning.

For more information: <http://www.fcps.edu/is/pos/index.shtml>

Our instructional program is also grounded in the Virginia Standards of Learning for all subject areas. The Standards of Learning adopted by the Virginia State Board of Education define the basic elementary program including Art, Health, Language Arts (Reading, Writing, and Oral Language), Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies. For more information: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/index.shtml

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

Our faculty and staff actively practice the Responsive Classroom philosophy. This approach to classroom life and learning emphasizes an environment that builds social and academic skills. The physical space in classrooms, morning meetings, and class and school rules are organized to facilitate opportunities for positive interaction.

Guiding Principles of the Responsive Classroom: The Responsive Classroom approach is informed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of exemplary classroom teachers. Seven principles guide this approach:

1. The social and emotional curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social and emotional skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.
7. How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Components of the Responsive Classroom Model: These classroom practices are the heart of Responsive Classroom:

- **Morning Meeting:** Gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation:** Helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Interactive Modeling:** Teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
- **Positive Teacher Language:** Using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences:** Responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity
- **Guided Discovery:** Introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
- **Academic Choice:** Increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- **Classroom Organization:** Setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- **Working with Families:** Creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- **Collaborative Problem Solving:** Using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

The First Six Weeks of School

The first six weeks of school are an essential time to build classroom and school communities. Routines and expectations are set and emphasis is put on how the class will work together as a community. During this period, parents and visitors are discouraged from visiting classrooms as their presence can hinder this group development. After this initial period, visitors are welcome to come into classrooms.

For more information about Responsive Classroom, [visit the Westgate web site.](#)

THE WESTGATE WAY

Common language that we use with the students aligns with our Westgate Way: Respect Myself, Respect Others, Respect Property.

We teach our students to use a conflict resolution strategy:

1. Say, "STOP! I don't like that."
2. Walk Away.
3. Get Help.

READING AND WRITING WORKSHOP

We utilize the Reading and Writing Workshop methodology developed at Teachers College at Columbia University as the core of our literacy instruction. Our instructional practices are also informed by other well-known reading researchers like Fountas and Pinnell, Regie Routman, Stephanie Harvey, Carl Anderson, Kathy Collins. In Reading Workshop, students are explicitly taught the strategies and habits of effective reading. They learn to talk, think, and write well about their reading, and to live richly literate lives. In Writing Workshop, students learn to observe their lives and the world around them, and to collect, draft, revise, and publish well-crafted narrative and expository texts. For more information about this instructional approach, visit: www.readingandwritingproject.com.

The key components of Balanced Literacy at Westgate include:

- Independent Reading in Just Right Books
- Interactive Read Aloud
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading
- Writing About Reading
- Writing Workshop
- Interactive Writing
- Shared Writing
- Word Study

READING LEVELS AND *JUST RIGHT BOOKS*

Students learn to read most effectively when they read books at their reading level. Our teachers use a variety of assessments to understand each child's individual reading level to maximize learning. Students are provided a variety of books and reading materials at their *Just Right* level. For more information about reading levels and *Just Right* books, please see your child's teacher.

MATHEMATICS

Our mathematics curriculum follows the FCPS Program of Studies and VA Standards of Learning. Math instruction is provided using a math workshop framework that incorporates the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Process Standards. Components of our math instruction include calendar math, math happenings, guided math, math learning stations, problem solving, reflection, and cognitively demanding tasks.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Science and Social Studies instruction is based on the POS Standards. Teachers are encouraged to design and deliver authentic, project-based social studies and science instruction. Integrating technology and research is strongly encouraged. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to use field trips and other extended learning opportunities to enrich and extend Science and Social Studies learning.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a terrific tool for enhancing delivery of instruction and gathering, sharing, and presenting information. We have laptops, desktops and iPads for students to access. SMART Boards, LCD projectors, digital cameras, video cameras, document cameras, and other instructional technology tools are available for teacher use to enhance lessons. Our School Based Technology Specialist is at Westgate full-time and her goals are to work with the teachers to integrate technology into instruction and train them on new technology resources in order to provide students regular access to technology. Our Technology Support Specialist is at Westgate part-time to support technology needs.

LIBRARY

Westgate's library program is a driving force behind student growth in reading and creating a love of reading. Students have scheduled library visits weekly but can also check out books at other times. Our library is staffed full-time by our Library Media Specialist. Instructional materials including basal, supplemental or library materials may be challenged by any group or individual residing in Fairfax County. Procedures for challenging instructional materials are contained in Regulation 3009, which is available online.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students sometimes experience challenges and need additional support beyond what the classroom teacher can provide. These difficulties may be academic, social, and/or emotional. When noted by school personnel, the process for addressing the difficulty may begin with a referral to Kid Watch, Response to Intervention Team, or to the school counselor. Often the issue is resolved during Kid Watch or at the school counseling level, but sometimes further assistance is necessary. When further information or resources are necessary, the child may be referred for special education services. If a child is found eligible to receive services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written and services are provided at school.

INCLUSION

We practice inclusion of all special needs students with the general education population. Students who receive English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or special education services spend the majority of the school day with their peers in the general education classroom setting. It is our philosophy that each child belongs to all of us; we are each responsible for every child's education.

ESOL students receive additional support if they are Non-English Proficient or Limited English Proficient. Occasionally students are taught the same content as their grade-level peers but in a small group setting outside of the classroom with the ESOL teacher. Special education students receive specialized individual or small group instruction outside of the general education population only if it is required in their IEP.

Westgate's ESOL and special education teachers work in classrooms to support the needs of our ESOL and special education students. ESOL, special education, and classroom teachers regularly plan together to create lessons that are comprehensive and appropriate for all students. ESOL and special education teachers rotate through the classrooms on a regular basis.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education services and instruction are combined with classroom instruction whenever possible, and most targeted instruction occurs in the general education setting. Students may be referred by an educational staff member or parent. Parents are involved in the referral, evaluation, and placement decision throughout the entire process. Each student receiving special education services will have an IEP developed and reviewed yearly with teachers and parents/guardians.

ENGLISH SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

ESOL services are provided to students who need additional support in developing English language proficiency. Services provided by the ESOL teacher are an integrated part of classroom instruction. ESOL students learn academic content simultaneously as they acquire English. Any student who has been exposed to another language in the home will take a yearly assessment, called WIDA ACCESS for ELL's. This federally mandated assessment is given in late January/February.

FAMILY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM (FECEP/HEADSTART)

FECEP is a child development program for three and four-year-old children. The program involves parents and community professionals working with staff to provide comprehensive services to address the child's education, emotional, social, health, nutritional, and physical needs. Eligibility for FECEP is based on family income. The school office can provide enrollment information. For more information:

<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/early-childhood-education/fecep-head-start>

ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAM (AAP)

Advanced Academic services are available for all students. Westgate is committed to providing challenging learning experiences for all learners that build on individual strengths and optimize academic potential. In order to meet the needs and develop the potential of advanced learners, FCPS and Westgate provide a continuum of advanced academic services. For more information: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/advanced-academic-programs>

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Band instruction is available to 5th and 6th grade students. String instruction is available to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. More information can be found here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/activities/band-and-strings>

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The elementary school counselors assist students, teachers, and parents in effectively meeting students' academic, social, and emotional needs in the school setting. Westgate has a full-time school counselor, a part-time school counselor, a social worker, and a psychologist on staff.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is used on an on-going basis to determine the mastery of content and the effectiveness of teaching. At least three times a year, all students are assessed using the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* or *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System*. This assessment monitors each child's individual progress in reading comprehension and fluency. Additionally, we use a variety of tools to regularly measure student progress towards meeting standards. These include teacher-created benchmark assessments, as well as a variety of other classroom tools.

All students take the Universal Screener (iReady) three times per year to provide teachers with information about reading and math strengths and needs. Students in grades 3-6 also participate in the FCPS eCART assessments. Given 2-4 times a year, these assessments align to the reading and math standards and skills presented on the SOL end-of-year assessments.

The Virginia SOL Assessment in Reading and Mathematics will be administered in May to third-sixth graders. Fourth graders will take a VA Studies SOL assessment in May and 5th graders will take a Science SOL.

More information about assessments can be found here: <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/performance-and-accountability/student-assessment>

HOWL TIME

HOWL Time is an all hands-on deck approach to providing personalized, targeted, small group instruction. All classes participate in HOWL time daily. Students are organized in small groups working together for six weeks on a specific topic.

HOMEWORK

Homework is designed to reinforce the day's lessons either by practicing skills or using new skills in different contexts. Homework assignments are designed to be developmentally appropriate for each grade level.

Families need to encourage and monitor their child's completion of homework. Children need a quiet, well-lit place to do homework and the family should have a nightly routine for where and when to do it. Families should check that homework is completed and offer assistance when needed, but should not complete their child's homework. Families also can help students pack their backpack for school to make sure the homework gets to class each morning.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

The Elementary School Progress Report is sent home after each grading period (4 times a year). The purpose of the progress report is to share student progress with parents/guardians. Teachers will request conferences with parents at the end of the 1st grading period. Additional conferences are encouraged and may be requested by either the parent or the teacher. More information on grading can be found here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/academics>

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Westgate observes the enrollment guidelines set forth by Fairfax County Public Schools. Children entering the school in Kindergarten or First Grade must be five or six years old, respectively, by September 30th. More information can be found here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/student-services/student-registration>

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND PARTY INVITATIONS

To support our goal of teaching healthy habits, cupcakes, birthday cakes, and ice cream may not be brought in and passed out at school in celebration of student's birthdays. If you want to send in a birthday treat for classmates, please send in a healthy snack for students to eat with their lunch (fruit snacks, pretzels, raisins, granola bars) or a small token (pencils, erasers) for each student. Party invitations to the entire class may be distributed during the school day. Invitations to select students must be delivered outside of school.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

All Fairfax County Public Schools offer a hot lunch daily. Breakfast is served from 8:30 – 8:40 a.m. The full-price fee for school lunch is \$3.25 per day and breakfast is \$1.75. Each child should pay for his/her lunch at the beginning of each school day. In addition, all families may apply for free or reduced price lunches. Applications will be sent home during the month of August and are available in the main office. Families have three options to put money on student lunch accounts: cash, check (payable to Westgate ES) or online at www.myschoolbucks.com. Breakfast and lunch menus are available online at <https://fcps.nutrislice.com/menu/westgate-elementary>

Students can bring lunch from home. Soft drinks and fast food are not allowed. If parents choose to bring fast food to school for their child, the child will eat in the main office. Students must bring utensils and napkins from home.

BULLYING

FCPS and Westgate are bound to ensure each child has a safe environment. Bullying in FCPS ***Students Rights and Responsibilities*** is defined as: "Any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" includes cyberbullying. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict." Instances of bullying are taken seriously and addressed using the Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) as well as Responsive Classroom strategies and structures. To report if your child has been bullied or a witness to these behaviors, contact our principal, Hallie Demetriades. More information: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/bullying-prevention-and-intervention>

CALENDAR

The FCPS and Westgate calendars can be found on our website: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/events>

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

When space is available at times that do not interfere with Fairfax County Public Schools instructional programs, student activities, activities of school-related groups, FCPS Adult Education classes, and Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, community members may reserve school facilities on a scheduled basis. Please refer to: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/community-use-school-facilities> and [School Board Regulation 8420 – Leasing and Community Use of Facilities](#) for additional information and scheduling.

DRESS CODE

All students are expected to dress appropriately for a K-12 educational environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing with language or images that are vulgar, discriminatory or obscene; or clothing that promotes illegal or violent conduct, such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia; or clothing that contains threats such as gang symbols is prohibited. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste and decency. Clothing that exposes cleavage, private parts, the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise sexually provocative, is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing includes, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines that show cleavage, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, clothing constructed of see-through material and head coverings unless required for religious or medical purposes. Parents of students requiring accommodation for religious beliefs, disabilities, or other good causes should contact the principal. Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing, change clothes, or go home. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action. See [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(regulation 2601\)](#).

Students should wear footwear that enables them to fully participate in recess and PE classes.

EMERGENCIES

In the event Westgate closes early and/or is evacuated because of an emergency, school personnel or parent volunteers will notify parents. Throughout the year we conduct several fire, tornado and lockdown drills. We conduct these drills to prepare our students, faculty, and staff in the event of a real emergency situation. Therefore, you should be aware that your child may discuss the occurrence of these drills with you.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year to provide Westgate students with learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom. Participating students are required to submit a completed field trip permission slip. These forms will be sent home by your child's teacher and provide specific information about the purpose of the trip, destination, date and time, mode of transportation (bus, car, Metro, walking), and the cost per student. Students will not be permitted to attend any field trip without a permission slip on file.

HEALTH ROOM

Westgate has the services of a health room aide assigned by the Fairfax County Health Department. Health room services include vision and hearing screening as well as height and weight checks. Parents are notified in writing of any possible concern or deficiency discovered during the screening. Health screenings in no way take the place of regular physical checkups.

Although medication should be taken at home whenever possible, there are cases in which medication must be taken during school hours in order to meet student health needs. Students who require medication during the school day must comply with FCPS Regulation 2102, First Aid, Emergency Treatment, Health Plans, and Administration of Medication for Students. You must first contact the Westgate health room aide to complete the necessary forms before bringing any medication to school. All prescription medication must be stored in the main office. Under no circumstances may any non-prescription medication including aspirin and cough drops be in the possession of children at school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of a school closing due to inclement weather you can find updates on the FCPS website, www.fcps.edu, or on the local news stations. Parents will also receive an email directly from FCPS informing you of the delay or closing. Please see more information on the school delay and closing policies here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/about/school-hours>

LOST AND FOUND

All students' articles should be clearly labeled with their name. Any articles found in and around the school will be placed in the lost and found area in the cafeteria. All items are donated at the end of the school year.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Westgate is a closed campus. As such, all visitors to the school, including parents, must report to the main office and sign in and out using the Visitor Computer. All doors are locked at 8:50 a.m.

No child is allowed to leave the school unless accompanied by an identified parent or guardian. Every student leaving school early must be signed out in the main office.

There is no supervision before or after school. As such, students should not be left unattended prior to 8:30 a.m. and should be picked up by 3:35 p.m.

SCHOOL AGED CHILD CARE (SACC)

SACC is available for students attending Westgate. This is a Fairfax County Office of Children program which provides professional care for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Moderate monthly fees are based on family income. For more information: <https://www.fcps.edu/registration/school-age-child-care-sacc>

SCHOOL HOURS

Our school hours are 8:40 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. More information on the school hours can be found here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/about/school-hours>

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The teachers of Westgate are trained in the Responsive Classroom Model. We believe all children need opportunities to practice appropriate behaviors in order to become independent and responsible citizens. Children are expected to follow class and school rules, and when they do not, appropriate consequences will be put in place. Teachers use a variety of grade-appropriate consequences including time outs, loss of privileges, take a break, and logical consequences.

Fighting, sexual, physical, or verbal harassment, including bullying, is not tolerated and will result in administrative action.

Westgate operates under all FCPS discipline guidelines outlined in the Students' Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) Regulation 2601, which is distributed to each child in September and available here: [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(regulation 2601\)](#).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review attendance policy and absence and tardy procedures here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/about/attendance>

ARRIVAL Arrival Time: 8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

The first bell rings at 8:40 a.m. and the tardy bell rings at 8:50 a.m. Supervision of students begins at 8:30 a.m. NO child should arrive at Westgate prior to 8:30 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:50 a.m. are considered tardy and must be accompanied into the office by a parent or guardian.

If students arrive between 8:30 – 8:40 a.m. they report to the gym (grades K-3) or cafeteria (grades 4-6). If your child arrives after 8:50 a.m., you must bring them to the office to sign in.

On the first day of school, parents are welcome to walk their child to the classroom. Starting on the second day, only students will be allowed to enter the school building in the morning (this is for the safety and security of all students – when we have too many parents, children without parents are overwhelmed and can get lost in the crowds). We will make sure your child gets to the right classroom.

DISMISSAL Dismissal Time: 3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Students are dismissed between 3:30 and 3:35 p.m. depending on how they go home in the afternoon. Bus riders and walkers exit through the front doors and car riders through Door 3 which leads to the west side parking lot and Kiss and Ride. Students meeting their parents to walk home meet at the main doors.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL SAFETY PROTOCOL

Keeping our students safe when they are arriving and dismissing from school is of utmost importance to us. We realize that Magarity Road is very busy during these times of the day. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that we are following the rules around drop off and pick up of students. Please following these protocols while driving around our school campus.

- The Bus Loop is only for buses from 8:10-8:55 a.m. and 3:10-3:50 p.m. No vehicles other than school buses or emergency vehicles may park in the bus loop during these times.
- Virginia state law forbids the passing of a school bus that is loading or unloading children.
- There is no parent parking in school parking lots or on Magarity during arrival and dismissal. We encourage you to walk, stay in your car and drop your child off at Kiss and Ride, or have your child ride the school bus (if available).The side parking lot (right side when looking at school) is for staff parking only at arrival and dismissal, and not for student drop off. Cars may not be parked on the school side of Magarity during arrival or dismissal time. This impedes on our Kiss and Ride Line and the overall flow of traffic.
- If you are driving your child to school, please use Kiss and Ride. See below for more information.
- Students and families must use the crosswalks across Magarity and refrain from walking in the bus loop or walking between the parked buses as children are loading. Having students run across Magarity anywhere but at the cross walk with the crossing guard is not prohibited and extremely dangerous.
- Please mind the staff member who crosses students at the beginning of the Kiss and Ride line. They are there to keep our students and families safe, so please pay close attention to them while they are at this post.
- Please drive with extreme caution around Westgate and within nearby neighborhoods. There are some narrow streets with limited visibility that can cause a potential safety issue to our many walking students.

KISS AND RIDE

Kiss and Ride is used when you are driving to Westgate and dropping off or picking up your child. The Kiss and Ride area is located in the back parking lot on the west side of the school. You drive up and drop off/pick up your child. Parents using Kiss and Ride are asked to use a Kiss and Ride tag with a number that is assigned to your child. Parents receive a Kiss and Ride tag at Open House or in the main office. Kiss and Ride tags do not need to be used in the morning. If you forget your tag in the afternoon, you can still use Kiss and Ride, just tell the staff member your number or who you are picking up.

- Do not arrive in Kiss and Ride line before 8:30 a.m. for arrival or before 3:25 p.m. for dismissal.
- Clearly display your Kiss and Ride tag number on the dashboard or visor.
- Drop off and pick up your child only in the Kiss and Ride traffic pattern.
- Pull your car forward as far as possible in the line.
- Make sure that your child exits/enters your car on the building side.
- If your child needs assistance carrying something please park to assist your child.
- For the sake of safety and flow of traffic, there is no left turn when leaving the Kiss and Ride line. There is limited visibility and we have almost had a number of accidents surrounding this issue.

WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

Recognizing the health benefits, FCPS encourages parents to consider having their children walk and/or ride a bicycle to and from school using existing infrastructure. This parental decision is not subject to review by the Principal. The unique procedures for kindergarten students are addressed in the current version of Regulation 8617, Student Transportation – Eligibility, Routes, and Schedules.

Students and families must use the crosswalks across Magarity and refrain from walking in the bus loop or walking between the parked buses as children are loading. Having students run across Magarity anywhere but at the cross walk with the crossing guard is not prohibited and extremely dangerous.

Westgate students who live in a walking area are encouraged to walk to/from school. If your child walks to/from school, review a safe walking route with your child. Walking students must use designated paths, sidewalks, or the crosswalk where safety patrols are stationed.

Westgate students who are in a walking area are encouraged to ride their bikes to/from school. If you decide to allow your child to ride a bike, please review a safe bike route, ensure they wear a helmet, and know how to lock their bike on a bike rack. Our bike rack is located in the front of school. Westgate is not responsible for stolen bikes.

Bicyclists should follow these guidelines:

- Obey [safety patrols](#), and automobile traffic rules, including signaling for turns and stopping at intersections.
- Bikes can be locked to the bike rack.
- *Bicycle helmets are mandatory to ride to school!*

BUS RIDERS

FCPS provides bus transportation for students who reside more than a mile from the school. Bus riders should follow these guidelines:

- Refrain from crossing or playing on private property.
- Cooperate with the [safety patrols](#) and obey the bus drivers.
- Arrive at the bus stop five to ten minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Remain seated and talk quietly after boarding the bus.

Procedures for safe transportation are discussed with all students at the beginning of the school year. It is also important that parents review with their children the information included on the form provided to all students who use school transportation. Parents' reinforcement of the rules for safe loading and unloading of buses and of standards for behavior on buses and at bus stops is essential and will promote safety. Student failure to exhibit acceptable standards of conduct while riding a school bus can result in a suspension of bus transportation.

Kindergarten Parents: For your child's safety, a parent, daycare provider, designated adult, or a sibling in 7th grade or higher is required to meet your child at the bus stop/bus door. If such person is not at the bus stop/bus door, the child will be returned to school.

Bus Delay Notification System

This system provides parents with timely notification of late bus route information. Parents may access the system at the link below or use the FCPS Mobile App to receive the delayed bus report. Morning route information will be available until noon. The afternoon route information will be available from 1-5 p.m.

Need assistance or have questions about FCPS transportation? Contact the Lavon Carter at LLCarter1@fcps.edu or at 703-249-7100 (in the FCPS transportation office for our school). For any concerns after hours, contact Safety and Security at 571-423-2000.

TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

Most of the textbooks and reading books used during the school day are provided by the Fairfax County Public Schools. Textbooks are loaned to students for the school year. These books should be kept covered, clean, and in good condition. Students and families will be held responsible for replacing books that have been damaged or lost.

Similarly, library books are for the general school population and high circulation is encouraged. Lost or damaged books must be returned, replaced, or paid for before the school year ends. If they are not, students may not receive their final report card and school records may not be forwarded.

TOYS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Toys should be left at home unless the teacher has made a special request that children bring them to school. Children who do not follow this rule may have the toy taken away until the end of the school day. Toys include balls, bats, games, electronic toys, sports cards, game cards, cars, dolls, etc. If students bring cell phones to school they must remain off and secured in their backpack throughout the day.

To support instruction, students are permitted to bring a personally owned electronic and computing device to school. The use of student owned devices is restricted to instructional activities under the direct supervision of a staff member. Students using privately owned electronic devices must follow the policies stated in the SR&R while on school property, attending school-sponsored activities or using the FCPS network. More information on BYOD can be found on our web site. <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/technology/bring-your-own-device-byod>

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

COMMUNICATION

We believe effective communication is essential to building and maintaining a strong school community. Westgate's Tuesday News is emailed to parents weekly and posted on the school website. [Our website](#) is also a great way to learn about upcoming events and activities. If you are not receiving the weekly news from Westgate, [sign up here on News You Choose](#). PTA communication is also by email. The PTA will no longer publish a student directory due to changes in Virginia policy regarding sharing that information.

TUESDAY NEWS

Each week Westgate publishes news for all families and students. This is an informative tool for sharing upcoming events, news and announcements, updated policies and procedures, and showcasing student and staff successes. Tuesday News is sent via email every Tuesday. If you want a paper copy of information sent home in Tuesday News, please contact the main office. Register for Tuesday News through News You Choose here: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAEDUFCPS/subscriber/topics?qsp=Westgate_ES

FCPS 24/7 LEARNING & SIS PARENT

[FCPS 24/7 Learning](#) is the online resource that allows Fairfax County Public Schools students to extend learning beyond the traditional school day and beyond school facilities. Students, parents, and teachers use FCPS 24-7 Learning to access homework and classroom materials, explore links to enrichment activities, and much more. SIS Parent provides online access to your child's attendance, performance and demographic information. For more information on SIS Parent review this information: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/technology/student-information-system-sis-fcps/sis-parent-account-overview>

MEETING WITH THE PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

School administration is available to meet with parents and it is best to schedule an appointment in advance. When appointments are scheduled, the principal can give full attention to the parent. If the issue relates to the classroom, it is best to talk with the classroom teacher first. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teacher, then it should be brought to the principal's attention. Parents may make appointments by calling the main office.

PARENT CONFERENCES

It is essential for parents and teachers to confer on a regular basis to discuss the progress of each student. At the end of the first quarter a parent/teacher conference is scheduled with each family.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Westgate has a very active Parent Teacher Association. The PTA meets on a monthly basis and plans a variety of programs and fundraisers for the school. As well, the PTA coordinates the Westgate After-School Program. More information can be found here: <http://www.westgatewolvespta.com/>

PARENT VISITS

Parents are always welcome to visit their child's class and the school. However, it is expected parents will contact the teacher in advance to set up a mutually agreeable time. All school visitors are required to sign-in at the main office, show identification, and receive a visitor's pass.

ROOM PARENTS

All classes have room parents who help communicate with families about upcoming field trips, events, or volunteer needs on behalf of the classroom.

STAFF EMAIL

All employees in Fairfax County Public Schools have an email account. This system offers teachers and principals a good way to communicate with parents. E-mail addresses for school staff are found on the school's web site here: <https://westgatees.fcps.edu/about/staff-directory>

VOLUNTEERS

Westgate welcomes volunteers. Volunteers can contribute to Westgate in a variety of ways including: reading, chaperoning, photocopying, helping in the classroom, organizing clean-up days, working in the library or health room, donating food for special events, etc. There is a FCPS process for becoming a regular volunteer or mentor. More information is available at: <https://www.fcps.edu/get-involved>