

Westgate Elementary School



Family and Student Handbook 2024-2025

Westgate Elementary School

7500 Magarity Road
Falls Church, VA 22043

<http://westgatees.fcps.edu>

Phone Numbers

Main Office	703-610-5700
Attendance Line	703-610-5757
Health Room	703-610-5710
Fax	703-610-5797

Office Staff

Hallie Demetriades, Principal
Summer Manos, Assistant Principal
Melissa Sevilla, Administrative Assistant/Finance
Tracy Green, Student Information Assistant
Kathy VargasBonilla, Office Assistant

hcdemetriade@fcps.edu
ssmanos@fcps.edu
mdsevilla@fcps.edu
tmgreen@fcps.edu
kvvargasboni@fcps.edu

School Hours

Office Hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Student Hours

Grades	Monday - Friday
PreK-6	8:40 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
PAC (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)	8:40 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
PAC (Monday & Wednesday)	8:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

Table of Contents

Westgate Elementary School Mission, Vision, and Values (Update?)	3
Mission	3
Vision	3
Values	4
Culture	4
Absence and Tardy	5
Absence	5
Unexcused Absence	5
Tardy	5
Arrival and Dismissal	6
Buses	7
Walkers	7
Car Riders	8
Bicycles	8
School Aged Child Care (SACC)	9
Change in Transportation Arrangement	9
Educational Program	9
The Westgate Way	9
Virginia State Standards	9
Responsive Classroom	10
Components of the Responsive Classroom Model: These classroom practices are the heart of Responsive Classroom:	10
The First Six Weeks of School	10
Literacy - Something about basal....	11
Mathematics	11
Science and Social Studies	11
Technology	11
Library	11
Student Support	11
Inclusion	11
Special Education	12
English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	12
Family Early Childhood Education Program (Pre-K)	12
Advanced Academic Program (AAP)	12
Instrumental Music	12
Mental Health Services	13
Assessment	13
MTSS/Intervention Time	13

Policies and Procedures	13
Birthday Celebrations	13
Cafeteria	13
Dress Code	14
Emergency Care Form	14
Emergency School Closing, Emergency Delayed Opening or Emergency Early Dismissal	14
All-Day Closing	15
Two-Hour Emergency Delayed Opening	15
Two-Hour Emergency Early Closing	15
Health Room Information	15
Illness or Injury	15
Contagious Illnesses	16
Medication	16
Homework	16
Lost and Found	17
Meeting with Teachers	17
Personal Property	17
Reporting to Parents	17
Release of Students	18
Safety and Security	18
Student Rights and Responsibilities (Regulation 2601)	19
Student Discipline	19
Telephone Use by Students	19
Parent Involvement	19
Communication	19
Weekly Westgate News	19
Parent Conferences	20
Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	20
Staff Email	20
Volunteers	20
Confidentiality	20
School Calendar 2024-2025	21

Westgate Elementary School Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Our mission is to ensure that all students grow in their academic ability and develop into responsible and innovative global citizens.

To this end:

- We will create a nurturing, safe, and respectful learning community with high expectations for ALL learners. Their individual learning needs will be met through a differentiated curriculum across all content areas to ensure they can access a well-rounded education.
- We firmly believe in data-driven instruction with frequent progress monitoring of students to know exactly where they are and allow for technology-rich instruction that drives learners forward to achieve their potential and expand their capabilities
- We will support learners in all of their future ambitions and develop learners who are effective communicators; collaborators; creative critical thinkers; global and ethical citizens; and goal-directed, resilient learners.

Vision

The best way to achieve the mission of Westgate Elementary is for all stakeholders to work together as a professional learning community that values relationships between all of its members.

We envision a school where:

- Staff members work together through weekly grade-level Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) and vertical team meetings across Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Advanced Academic Programs (AAP), and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS);
- Staff members use a variety of relevant assessments to drive instruction;
- Staff members participate in professional development opportunities that continue their learning, improve their classroom practices, and raise student achievement;
- Staff members use culturally responsive pedagogy that allows all students to see themselves and learn about and from each other
- Staff, parents, and the community support each other and build relationships to increase feelings of belonging for all learners;
- All members of the community value diversity and equitable access to education for all learners that widens perspectives and dispels prejudices and fights harmful stereotypes;
- Students follow the Westgate Way by respecting themselves, respecting others, and respecting property every day;
- Students take responsibility for their actions and their learning through goal setting and reflection daily;
- Students understand how to be responsible digital citizens and follow the Westgate Way when using any devices or digital platforms; and
- Students are challenged to think critically and learn essential understandings, knowledge, and skills at each grade level.

Values

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 use CLTs to analyze all available data from assessments, observations, or interactions to determine how to differentiate instruction best and ensure each learner is receiving what they need to grow in their abilities
- We will use assessment data to drive instruction and guide the development of goals for each student. Remediation and enrichment will be provided to students to ensure they can meet their goals;
- We will develop relationships with students, parents, staff, and the community through open and frequent communication to support each learner in growing and reaching their academic potential;
- We will focus on staff development and professional learning to increase our abilities and reframe best practices during staff meetings;
- We will develop schedules to provide uninterrupted math and language art blocks and MTSS times for reteaching at each grade level. Planning time will be aligned for grade level collaboration between all relevant stakeholders; and
- We will have school-wide recognition of student growth, achievement, or character through assemblies, morning news show segments, bulletin boards, newsletters, notes, emails, TalkingPoints messages, and notes sent home.

Culture

Westgate Elementary School is in the Tysons Corner area of Northern Virginia and opened in the fall of 1968. The student population exemplifies a rich, diverse cultural heritage representing over 39 countries. Westgate offers a warm and stimulating climate in which children come first. Westgate is part of Region 5 of Fairfax County Public Schools.

The school embraces the collaborative approach to education, focusing on parents, staff members, and the community working as a team to promote the academic growth and success of each learner. Students are heterogeneously grouped in classrooms. Dedicated staff members provide a program that promotes intellectual curiosity, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and self-discipline. The early childhood program focuses on the total development of the child and the process of learning.

The Westgate school plan includes initiatives relating to language arts, math, science, and social studies. Technology is used as a tool for learning. The visual and performing arts and the physical development of each child are vital parts of the school program. Teachers plan together to design a meaningful, well-developed program for all students. FECEP is a valuable preschool experience for many students. Dedicated and talented staff members collaborate with parents to ensure an inviting, child-centered environment that emphasizes academic excellence and a positive nurturing school culture that honors diversity and strives for equitable access to education to allow for success for all learners.

By being child-centered, involving students in real-life experiences, empowering students to be responsible for their learning, making the arts and physical development an integral part of the program, and using technology as an essential learning tool, Westgate is preparing its students for their future.

Absence and Tardy

Absence

Parents are requested to contact the school office each time a child is absent. Please call the attendance hotline at **703-610-5757** between the hours of **4:30 p.m. and 9:30 a.m.** or **report a full day absence in ParentVUE**. After **9:30 a.m.**, parents should call the school office at **703-610-5700**. **When reporting an absence due to illness, please report any and all symptoms your child is experiencing.** Families of students not reported absent by **9:30 a.m.** will receive an automated eNotify attendance notification message.

Virginia State law requires that each student who is absent from school must be reported each time by a responsible person. An excused absence is one for which parents/guardians have prior knowledge, consent, and a legitimate reason. Legitimate reasons include: illness of the student, death in the family, and observance of a religious holiday. **Absences for family and student vacations are unexcused.**

Dental and medical appointments are excused; however we ask that such appointments be kept to a minimum during the instructional day. If a child must leave early for a medical or dental appointment, parents are requested to send a note in advance and must sign the child out in the office at the appropriate time. **To protect instructional time, students will not be called to the office until a parent arrives at school to pick them up.** Please allow sufficient time for your child to get to the office in order for you to arrive on time to your scheduled appointment.

Unexcused Absence

Absences for family and student vacations are unexcused. Students are responsible for completing any missed assignments. Teachers will provide the student and parent or guardian with missed work but are not obligated to provide assignments prior to family or student vacations.

According to state law, the following actions need to be taken:

- 5 Unexcused days - parent notification via letter and plan required
- 6 Unexcused days - (one additional day) - conference required
- 7 Unexcused days - attendance officer involved, possible court action

Weekly attendance calls will be made to parents whose students have accrued five or more unexcused absences, requesting that parents contact the school to develop an attendance plan.

Tardy

Parents are requested to contact the school office if a child will be tardy. Please call the attendance hotline at **703-610-5757** between the hours of **4:30 p.m. and 9:30 a.m.** **After 9:30 a.m., parents should call the school office at 703-610-5700.**

Students arriving at school late must first report to the office for correction of attendance records. Car riders arriving tardy should be brought to the front of the school building and accompanied into the office by a parent/guardian as the back door is locked at 8:40 a.m. **The first bell rings at 8:40 a.m. and teachers begin the instructional day as soon as the first student enters the room. The tardy bell rings at 8:50 a.m. Students who arrive in their classroom after 8:50 a.m. will be marked tardy.** Students

who are repeatedly tardy in a school year will have a letter placed in their school file. If the student continues to be tardy a meeting with the principal, counselor, student, and parent will be held to discuss the situation.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival Time: 8:40 a.m. - 8:50 a.m.

The first bell rings at 8:40 a.m. and the tardy bell rings at 8:50 a.m. NO child should arrive at Westgate prior to 8:35 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.

Doors will open at 8:40 a.m. and students will go right to their classroom.

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. There will be many staff members present to make sure all children get to the right classroom.

Dismissal Time: 3:25 p.m. - 3:35 p.m.

Students are dismissed between 3:25 p.m. and 3:35 p.m. depending on how they go home in the afternoon. Bus riders exit through Door 1 and walkers exit through Door 9. Car riders exit through Door 3, which leads to the west side parking lot and Kiss and Ride. Students meeting their parents to walk home meet at Door 9. If parents are meeting a Kindergarten student, they should wait at Door 8.

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 follow these protocols while driving around our school campus.

- **The Bus Loop is only for buses from 8:10-9:00 a.m. and 3:00-3:50 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 crosswalk 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.

Buses

Bus service is provided for children who live more than one mile from the school or where walking is hazardous. Bus riders are expected to:

- Avoid crossing over or playing on private property.
- Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.
- Remain seated and talk quietly after boarding the bus.
- Cooperate with the safety patrols and bus drivers.

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.

We have many buses delivering children to Westgate Elementary. The buses will pull into the bus lanes in the front of the school. Students will enter the school from their buses through the front lobby doors. Adults will be present at all arrival and dismissal times to ensure your child's safety.

Kindergarten and Preschool 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 one of these individuals is not at the bus stop/bus door, the child will be returned to school.

Walkers

Parents are responsible for selecting their children's walking routes to and from bus stops, schools, and home. Parents are also responsible for providing supervision that is appropriate to the student's age, the student's maturity, and conditions on the route.

FCPS staff does not assess all possible walking routes, supervise those routes, or guarantee the safety of any particular route. Staff provides general safety information to school communities, and responds to requests for specific information and advice when practicable.

Walkers will enter the school through Door 9. Students should not arrive at school before 8:40 a.m. and no later than 8:50 a.m. Our morning staff is on duty from 8:40-8:50 a.m. **There will be no supervision prior to 8:40 a.m.** The first bell rings at 8:40 a.m. Teachers begin the instructional day at 8:40 a.m. as soon as the first student enters the room. The tardy bell rings at 8:50 a.m. All students should be in their classroom by 8:50 a.m. when the tardy bell rings.

Walkers must walk home at the end of the school day. Students may not stay on the playground at the end of the day without parental supervision and/or checking in at home first.

Car Riders

Car riders must use the Kiss and Ride area behind the school. **For safety reasons, the bus loop is restricted to bus traffic in the morning and afternoon. Parents are not permitted to drop students off or use the bus loop in front of the school between 8:10 - 9:00 a.m. and between 3:00 - 3:40 p.m.**

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, by telling the staff member your number or who you are picking up.

- Do not arrive in the 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.
- **NO left hand turns** allowed in, or out of, Kiss and Ride during arrival or dismissal
- There are **NO illegal u-turns** allowed in front of the school on Magarity Road. Please enter Kiss and Ride from the correct side (towards rt. 7) and follow the traffic pattern to ensure student and staff safety.

Please treat staff members monitoring Kiss and Ride respectfully. Remember that Kiss and Ride is offered as a courtesy to parents and these staff members make it possible to offer this service.

Students should not arrive at school before 8:30 a.m. Staff is on duty at Kiss and Ride from 8:38-8:50 a.m. **There will be no supervision prior to 8:38 a.m.** The first bell rings at 8:40 a.m. Teachers begin the instructional day at 8:40 a.m. as soon as the first student enters the room. The tardy bell rings at 8:50 a.m. All students should be in their classroom by 8:50 a.m. when the tardy bell rings.

Car rides must be picked up by 3:35 p.m. Car riders who have not been picked up by 3:35 p.m. will be escorted to the school office until a parent or guardian arrives. Students may not stay on the playground at the end of the day without parental supervision and/or being picked up first.

Bicycles

The decision of whether a student is capable of riding their bicycle to school is left up to the parent. Parents should take the following into consideration:

- Their child's age, maturity level, and physical condition.
- Has the child demonstrated proficiency riding a bike?

Prior to your child riding a bicycle to school, determine the riding route to school. Discuss alternate routes in the event the primary route is inaccessible.

Bike racks are available at the front of the school by the bus loop. Students are strongly encouraged to lock their bikes at school.

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>

Change in Transportation Arrangement

In the event that your child will be dismissed in a manner that is not how they typically go home, the parent should send a note or email to the classroom teacher in the morning. Please ensure that the classroom teacher receives this notification prior to 11:00 a.m. In the event that there is an emergency and you need to change your child's dismissal arrangement after 11:00 a.m., notify the main office.

Parents escorting their children to school or picking them up at the end of the day may not walk to the classroom.

Educational Program

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.

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

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.

Literacy

The FCPS literacy program is aligned with the Virginia Department of Education English Standards of Learning which includes standards in the larger domains of reading, writing, communication, and research. Literacy instruction in FCPS centers on the components of effective literacy development. These include phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as identified by the National

Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] 2000) as well as writing and oral language.

Recognizing the complexity of literacy development and instruction, FCPS takes a comprehensive approach to literacy education. Through this approach, students receive instruction using a variety of evidence-based instructional methods. This approach enables teachers to address the VDOE Standards of Learning and ensure that instruction aligns with the FCPS Learning Model.

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. Westgate is a 1:1 school for student devices (iPads in Kindergarten; Laptops in Grades 1-6). We also have SMART Boards, LCD projectors, digital cameras, document cameras, and other instructional technology tools available for teacher use to enhance lessons. Our School Based Technology Specialist is at Westgate full-time and works 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 students with the general education population. Students who are multilingual learners (MLL) and students who receive 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.

Multilingual learners 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 multilingual learners and students with disabilities. ESOL, special education, and classroom teachers regularly plan together to create lessons that are comprehensive, differentiated, and appropriate for all students. ESOL and special education teachers rotate through the classrooms on a regular basis.

Multilingual Learners (formerly English Speakers of Other Languages - ESOL)

Services are provided to students who need additional support in developing English language proficiency due to the identification of being a multilingual learner (MLL). Services provided by the ESOL teacher are an integrated part of classroom instruction. 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 MLL's. This federally mandated assessment is given in late January/February.

Family Early Childhood Education Program (Pre-K)

PreK is a child development program for four and five-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 PreK 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 and Westgate also houses a Level IV program. Westgate has a full time Advanced Academics Resource Teacher and 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 two full-time school counselors, 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. Teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessments to identify students' strengths and needs and make data-driven instructional decisions. Formal assessments are administered and analyzed several times annually to measure instructional impact and drive instructional decisions. In addition, FCPS uses the iReady Universal Screening tool to identify students for potential reading risk and use additional diagnostics to pinpoint students' needs.

The Virginia SOL Assessment in Reading and Mathematics will be administered in May to third-sixth graders. Fifth 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>

MTSS/Intervention Time

MTSS is an all hands-on deck approach to providing personalized, targeted, small group instruction. All classes participate in this time daily. Students are organized in small groups working together for determined periods of time.

Policies and Procedures

Birthday Celebrations

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, you must do so with non-food items. Due to student allergies and health concerns, any food items sent to school for birthday celebrations will not be distributed and will be sent back home with your child. If your child is inviting classmates to his or her birthday party, please do not have your child distribute the invitations at school.

Cafeteria

All Fairfax County Public Schools offer breakfast and hot lunch daily. Breakfast is served from 8:40 – 8:50 a.m. Breakfast and lunch menus are available online at <https://fcps.nutrislice.com/menu/westgate-elementary>

Nutritious school breakfasts and lunches are served daily at Westgate. Daily milk choices are 1% milk, skim milk, and skim chocolate milk. Children with milk allergies may receive an alternate drink option upon receipt of a physician's statement.

Students are given an adequate lunch period and are expected to eat lunch unless excused in writing by a parent. During religious observations, it is understood that some students may be fasting.

Students should not bring canned, glass bottled drinks, caffeinated beverages, or soda to school, including the cafeteria. Students are welcome to have a water bottle at school. We have three refill stations throughout the building.

Dress Code

The student dress code supports FCPS' goal of inspiring students to learn while leaving primary decisions around student clothing and style to students and their parents or guardians. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring student compliance with the division's dress code and students are responsible for complying with the dress code during school hours and school-related activities.

FCPS respects students' right to express themselves in the way they dress. It is important, however, that their appearance is tasteful and appropriate for a K-12 school setting.

Please reference the www.fcps.edu/srr for FCPS specific Dress Code.

Emergency Care Form

This form is our "lifeline". We cannot emphasize enough the importance of having accurate, up-to-date parent information on this form. Your child's well-being at school depends on it! **Please update this information on ParentVue by the first or second day of school.**

We will not release any child to any adult other than the parent/guardian or persons listed on the emergency care form. Please list several friends, neighbors, and/or relatives whom we may contact in the event of an emergency if we cannot reach you at home or work. Do not list pager numbers unless you will be able to return our call promptly. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing this form.

Emergency School Closing, Emergency Delayed Opening or Emergency Early Dismissal

In the event of an emergency, such as extreme heat, cold or snow, the Division Superintendent may decide to:

- Close schools for the day.
- Open schools two hours late.
- Close schools two hours early.

All emergency closings and delayed openings shall be announced in the following ways:

- Listed on the Fairfax County Public Schools web site: www.fcps.edu.
- Sent by electronic mail (e-mail)
- Carried on the division's public access channel, Cox Cable Channel 21.
- Closings and delayed openings are provided to local radio and television stations no later than 5:30 a.m.
- Early closings are provided to local stations no later than 10:30 a.m.

All-Day Closing

- All schools shall be closed for the day.

- Extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, adult and community education classes, and recreation programs in schools and on school grounds are canceled.
- All offices are open unless the closing of offices is specified.

Two-Hour Emergency Delayed Opening

- Students in grades K-6 shall report two hours later than their regular schedule.
- Morning field trips are canceled.
- Morning preschool classes (special education) shall be canceled. Afternoon preschool start on their normal schedule.
- All offices are open unless the closing of offices is specified.

With any delayed opening the buses will arrive to pick up the students two hours later than the regularly scheduled time.

Two-Hour Emergency Delayed Opening Schedule

Grades	Monday - Friday
PreK-6	10:40 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
PAC	10:40 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Two-Hour Emergency Early Closing

- All students shall be dismissed two hours early.
- Morning preschool classes are dismissed at approximately 11 a.m. Afternoon preschool classes are canceled.
- Field trips are canceled.

Two-Hour Emergency Early Closing Schedule

Grades	Monday - Friday
PreK-6	8:40 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
PAC	8:40 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Health Room Information

Health room services in the school, including the administration of medication and modified first aid, are performed by the health room aide, parent volunteers, and office staff. The staff may provide care only for minor illnesses and injuries.

Illness or Injury

If your child is injured or becomes sick at school, we will notify you immediately. If we cannot reach a parent, we will call a person you have listed on your Emergency Care Form. It is important that we have an Emergency Care Form on file for each student and that the information is updated as changes occur. Please include several neighbors and family members on the form.

Contagious Illnesses

Please reference the latest policies, procedures, and guidance regarding health and safety on FCPS' website: www.fcps.edu.

In accordance with the communicable disease policy for Fairfax County Public Schools students with symptoms such as rashes, skin eruptions, water and inflamed eyes, fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea should stay home until the doctor evaluates their symptoms and determines whether they are contagious, or the symptoms are no longer present. **Students with an elevated temperature should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school without fever-reducing medications.**

Parents will be contacted and expected to take their child home if he/she is sent to school with symptoms of an illness, becomes sick, or develops a rash.

Please notify the school office if your child should contract chicken pox, strep throat, measles, head lice, or any other contagious disease.

Medication

If your child MUST receive medication during school hours, you are required to complete the appropriate Fairfax County Public Schools authorization forms available in the school office.

Medication will not be dispensed without proper authorization from a physician.

Please complete all medication forms accurately before bringing medication to school.

A student may carry and use an inhaler for asthmatic conditions when the student's physician and parent have both completed the necessary form available from the school clinic.

The first dose of any new medication must be given at home. Parents or guardians are responsible for submitting a new form to the school each time there is a change in the dosage or in the time at which the medication is to be taken.

Parents are reminded that children may not transport or possess any prescription or over the counter medication, at any time. **ALL MEDICATION, PRESCRIPTION OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION MUST BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL BY A PARENT.** However, students may bring over the counter cough drops in their original package. They may not share cough drops or any other medication with other students. Any child, regardless of age, who brings or possesses medication or any drug-related paraphernalia to school, will be disciplined according to FCPS Regulation 2610.

Homework

Homework should serve a positive purpose for learning and support the instructional program. Homework should be a vehicle through which students practice skills introduced in the classroom or expand knowledge by means of research, application, experimentation, or reflection. In FCPS, homework across disciplines should not exceed 0.5 hour at the primary level, 1 hour at the upper elementary level, and 1.5 hours at the middle school level.

Parents can help students develop effective study skills and complete homework assignments by:

1. Providing space for doing homework and a specific time for study.
2. Providing books and opportunities to read.
3. Reading to the child.
4. Encouraging the exploration of the world outside the classroom.

5. Providing the tools to aid learning.
6. Maintain communication with teachers and counselors.

If you feel that your child is spending an undue amount of time on his/her homework, please contact the teacher to discuss the matter.

Lost and Found

Please **label all clothing and lunch boxes** with your child's name so lost items can be quickly identified and returned to the owner. Articles found in classrooms are temporarily held by the teacher until identified by the child. After a reasonable time, these articles are placed in the "lost and found area" by the cafeteria. Parents are encouraged to come to school to check for lost items. All unclaimed articles remaining in the lost and found area at the end of each semester will be given to charity.

Meeting with Teachers

Please remember when you are coming to volunteer, drop your child off, or pick your child up, this is not a time when teachers are able to meet with you. If you have a concern that you wish to discuss with your child's teacher, please connect with the teacher to arrange a time. In the morning and afternoon, teachers need to attend to the students. Planning time is used for arranged meetings, collaboration with colleagues, and instructional planning. Even short impromptu meetings make it difficult for the teachers to meet their contractual obligations.

Personal Property

Students are responsible for the personal property that they bring to the school building, on school grounds, on a school-sponsored function such as a field trip, or on a school bus. Fairfax County Public Schools does not assume responsibility for the personal property of students and does not insure their property or otherwise reimburse students for loss of or damage to their property. Students and their parents should consider carefully the value of property brought to school. **Electronic games, expensive equipment, and excess money should not be brought to school.** Students may not bring toys or stuffed animals to school unless the items are related to a current unit of study or approved by the classroom teacher. **Westgate staff members may not accept responsibility for student property on behalf of the school.**

If a student brings equipment, his/her teacher will take it and return it to the student at the end of the day. Parents will be called if the item cannot safely be taken home on the bus.

Reporting to Parents

The progress of all students in grades K-6 will be reported using a standards-based progress report. These reports are issued four times per year at the completion of each grading period.

Achievement levels are based on but not limited to: daily work, classroom assignments, tests, and related activities. Each achievement level is based on the evaluation of the child's progress in three areas of learning:

- Concepts for each subject studied.
- Skills or processes needed to learn that subject.
- Ability to apply the learned knowledge in practical situations.

Life, Work, and Citizenship Skills and Effort levels are based on the initiative and participation demonstrated by the child. The Life, Work, and Citizenship Skills are aligned with School Board goals. Effort marks are specifically based on participation, quality of work, receptivity to feedback, and perseverance.

A standards-based progress report measures a student's progress according to how he or she is performing on expected standards. It provides more detailed information about what a student is learning and can demonstrate in each content area. Progress on the report cards for grades K-6 is indicated on a continuum from consistently demonstrating to seldom demonstrating achievement pertaining to particular standards.

Our teachers take seriously the responsibility to have appropriate and adequate communication with parents throughout the year. With the change in the calendar and current practice, two teacher workdays are no longer designated for conferences with parents. During the school year, conferences may be requested by either the teacher or parent. Parents requesting a conference are asked to write a note to the teacher, leave a telephone message, or e-mail him/her. Drop-in visits or conferences in the hall during the school day or before or after school hours are discouraged. You are encouraged to please make an appointment.

Interim Reports are sent to select students approximately at the mid-point of a quarter. Interim reports are used to communicate exceptional progress, improvement, or unsatisfactory progress, and additional interims may be sent at any time.

Release of Students

If a child must leave early, parents are requested to send a note in advance and must sign the child out in the office at the appropriate time. The note should specify the name of the adult picking up the child if it is not the parent. **To protect instructional time, students will not be called to the office until a parent arrives at school to pick them up.** Please allow sufficient time for your child to get to the office and for you to arrive on time to your scheduled appointment.

We will not release any child to any adult other than the parent/guardian or persons listed on the Emergency Care Form. Students may be released to either parent unless prohibited by a court order. If restricted custody has been legally established, a parent must furnish a copy of the custody order to be kept on file in the school office.

Safety and Security

All persons entering the building during the school day must report to the office. Visitors to the school will only be able to gain access to the school through the main doors at the front of the school. There is a bell for visitors to ring on the left side of the door. One of the office staff will be able to view the visitor through a camera phone. After being "buzzed" into the school, the visitor will be directed to the office to sign in and obtain a visitor's badge. You will need your driver's license to sign in. Visitors are not allowed to go to a classroom, cafeteria, or the gym without acquiring a badge from the office. If you need to deliver something to your child, please bring it to the office, and the office will contact your child.

Student Rights and Responsibilities (Regulation 2602.39P)

A safe learning environment is essential for all children. At Westgate, we believe that demonstrating respect, responsibility and kindness towards self and others is essential for learning. Classroom expectations and school rules will be discussed and taught during the first days of school. We want all children to have a positive experience at school. Please encourage your child to set high standards for behavior and discuss the importance of valuing others. The Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) will be shared electronically. All

parents need to read and review the Rights and Responsibilities information with their children **and electronically confirm receipt of receiving the SR&R.**

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), which is distributed to each child in August/September and available here: <https://www.fcps.edu/srr>

Telephone Use by Students

Students are not allowed to make telephone calls during the school day except in cases of emergency. Please help your child develop a routine for placing books, homework, money, instruments, etc. in a designated place to make sure those things make it to school. **FCPS policy is that student cell phones must be turned off and are away in backpacks throughout the day.** Other communication devices (ex. smart watches, etc) need to be disabled throughout the school day.

Parent Involvement

Communication

We believe effective communication is essential to building and maintaining a strong school community. Westgate's News You Choose 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.

Weekly Westgate News

Either weekly or bi-weekly, 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 Your Choose here:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAEDUFCPS/subscriber/topics?qsp=Westgate_ES

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 (PTA)

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

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 who 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>

Confidentiality

As per Policy 2730.1: All employees *and volunteers*, shall be expected to maintain personally identifiable student information, whether oral, written, or automated, in a confidential manner. Personally identifiable student information shall be disclosed within the school division only to individuals who have a legitimate educational interest and a bona fide need for access to the information. Such information shall not be otherwise disclosed within or outside the school division without appropriate consent or as otherwise authorized by law. For purposes of these requirements, *volunteers* shall be held to the same standards as are employees.

School Calendar 2024-2025

August 19, 2024	First Day of School
August 30 - September 2	Labor Day - Student Holiday
October 3	Rosh Hashanah - Student Holiday
October 4	Professional Workday - Student Holiday
October 14	Professional Workday - Student Holiday
October 31	First Grading Period Ends - 2 hour Early Release
November 1	Diwali - Student Holiday
November 4 - 5	Professional Workdays - Student Holidays
November 11	Veterans Day - Student Holiday
November 27 - 29	Thanksgiving Break
December 23 - January 3, 2025	Winter Break
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday - Student Holiday
January 28	Second Grading Period Ends - Full School Day
January 29	Professional Workday- Student Holiday
February 17	Presidents' Day - Student Holiday
March 28	Third Grading Period Ends - Full School Day
March 31	Eid-al-Fitr - Student Holiday
April 1	Professional Workday- Student Holiday
April 14 - 18	Spring Break
May 26	Memorial Day - Student Holiday
June 11	Last Day of School - Early Release