

MISSION STATEMENT

The Westhampton Elementary School is committed to establishing an environment in which we encourage good character formation, foster self-esteem, stimulate continual curiosity and develop a life-long desire for learning. The mission of the Westhampton Elementary School is to provide a broad range of learning experiences and equal opportunities for students to grow to their full potential.

PROFILE

Westhampton Elementary School is located in a small rural community that is supportive of education. We serve children in grades pre-kindergarten through grade six. Our address is 37 Kings Highway, Westhampton, MA 01027. The school's telephone number is (413) 527-0561. The FAX number is (413) 529-9753. Our e-mail address is *wes37kings@comcast.net* and our web page can be found at www.westhamptonelementaryschool.org.

Our basic premise is that learning is an active process shared by students and staff. This process takes many different forms with teachers serving as models. Content is important, but emphasis will also be put on the process. Skill development, critical thinking, and problem solving will be taught eclectically and include constructivist and whole language approaches. Students will be viewed developmentally, and instructional expectations will be based accordingly. The feelings of self-worth and self-esteem of both students and staff are paramount. They will feel comfortable and be willing to take risks. The majority of the time students of varying abilities will be working together in a supportive, cooperative environment. Students will respect others' opinions and share ideas, and each student will be a valuable, contributing member of the group. There will be a maximum amount of inclusion in the least restrictive setting. There will be considerable inter-grade involvement. Examples of the students' work will be displayed throughout the school, and building-wide themes and projects will be in evidence.

RESIDENCE VERIFICATION

Educational services at the elementary school are available only to those students who reside in the town. Accordingly, the Town Clerk will be provided with a list of student names and addresses for purposes of verifying residency.

ADMINISTRATION

Westhampton, with two neighboring towns, is a member of School Union 66. Such rural school unions are formed in the interests of administrative and financial efficiency, sharing the services of a school superintendent and office staff, as well as other supervisory personnel where such cooperative use is desired and appropriate. The Superintendent's Office is located in the Hampshire Regional High School on Stage Road, Westhampton, MA 01027. The telephone number is (413) 527-7200.

Local authority for the school rests with the three-member School Committee. School Committee members traditionally are elected for three-year terms and are eligible for re-election. In response to the Massachusetts Reform Act of 1993, we have established a School Council that will serve the principal and School Committee in an advisory capacity. The site-based team is made up of the principal, two teachers, three parents, and a community member.

Westhampton is also part of the Hampshire Regional School District for grades 7 through 12. Two elected members of the community and one appointed member of the local School Committee represent Westhampton on the Regional School Committee. Young people primarily interested in vocational education may attend Smith Vocational Agricultural High School in Northampton, a four-year high school admitting students at the freshman level.

ATTENDANCE

The School Committee strongly believes that regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that among the responsibilities of parents of students attending Westhampton Elementary School, is the requirement to ensure that their children attend school regularly in accordance with state law.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

According to Chapter 76, Section 1 of Massachusetts General Law, more than fourteen (14) absences per year is considered excessive. Regulations that govern MCAS performance appeals state that students must have maintained at least 95% attendance level during the school year prior to testing and the year of the appeal.

Students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family.
3. Documented legal responsibilities.
4. Observance of major religious holidays.

School begins at 8:30 A.M. To avoid confusion and to give your children an equal start with classmates, we strongly encourage you to make sure they arrive by 8:30.

PRESCHOOL

Children are eligible to attend the Westhampton Integrated Preschool Program if they are three or four years old by September 1. Preschool meets two/three/four half days for non SPED students and parents are responsible for tuition. In the past we have received a Community Partnership Grant that, based on income, has lowered the tuition for some students. The goals of this program are

- to build healthy and positive self concepts.
- to provide opportunities to enhance social skills.
- to encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment.
- to promote language development.
- to encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutrition habits.
- to respect cultural diversity.
- to develop initiative and decision-making skills.
- to provide opportunities for physical development.

KINDERGARTEN

We offer a full day program (8:30 - 3:00). Registration for kindergarten is held in the spring. To be eligible, a child must be five years old on or before September 1. A birth certificate and a record of all required immunizations should be presented at registration. The state requires that each child complete the following immunizations before entering school: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio series, measles, rubella (German Measles), mumps, hepatitis B (1997) and lead poisoning screening. One dose of the varicella vaccine is required if the child has not had chicken pox. A physical exam by your private physician is required before a child enters kindergarten.

As mandated by law, all children entering kindergarten must be screened for special needs. The screening must be completed by October 31. This involves evaluation of speech and language as well as academic and motor skills. The child's vision and hearing are also checked. Parents will receive a report of the screening results.

SCHOOL HEALTH

The school nurse is responsible for a program designed to promote, protect, and maintain the health of students. Upon admission into the school, a child's health record is established and maintained. To help keep records up to date, please notify the nurse if your child has a physical or receives an immunization booster. Individual plans of care are designed for those with specific medical concerns. The nurse should be contacted prior to your child taking medication in school so that the appropriate policies and procedures are followed. The following yearly screenings are done on all students: height, weight, vision, and hearing. Postural screening is done in grades five and six. Parents are notified if there is a need for follow-up tests.

A fluoride rinse is administered weekly to students in grades 1 through 6 after receiving parental permission. Our school physician, who is available for consultation, also conducts physical exams in grade 3. The required exam can be done by the family doctor with a written report sent to the school.

CONFERENCES AND REPORT CARDS

Twenty minute parent-teacher conferences are scheduled after the first marking term in November. As a supplement to the conference, parents will receive a form which outlines student progress for the first term. Parents and teachers are encouraged to schedule conferences at other times whenever they feel a need. Report cards are distributed in January, April, and June. Kindergarten report cards are issued in January and June.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework assignments provide ongoing opportunities for our students to learn good study habits, develop a sense of responsibility for task completion, and learn time management. These skills will help them transition to junior high and high school successfully. The Westhampton Elementary School staff believes that homework assignments strengthen the ties between home and school. Both the school and the home must assume their responsibilities if successful implementation of this policy is to be achieved. Parent cooperation is crucial in this matter.

As a general guideline each class is assigned approximately 10 minutes of homework per grade level; i.e. ,first grade 10 minutes, second grade 20 minutes, etc.

At the primary level, homework may be modified at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Homework at this level may be given if a child has not completed work assigned for class time or as an extension of work being done by the class on a particular thematic unit. Many assignments given to primary students require some parental participation. It is expected that all assignments will be completed with accuracy, neatness, and effort.

At the intermediate level, a structured schedule will be followed for homework. At this level, homework is expected to be completed with 70% accuracy. Monthly meetings may be scheduled with parents of students not completing homework on a regular basis. The following schedule has been set for homework at the intermediate level:

- Grade 3 - At least thirty minutes of homework will be given per day Monday - Thursday.
- Grade 4 - At least 30 minutes of homework will be given per day Monday - Thursday. Book reports and other long-range projects will be assigned periodically.
- Grade 5 - At least 50 minutes of homework will be given per day Monday - Thursday. Long-range projects will be assigned periodically.
- Grade 6 - At least 1 hour of homework will be given per day Monday - Friday. Long-range projects will be assigned frequently.

At all grade levels, homework will be assigned to meet the needs and abilities of each student. Expectations for homework will be adjusted as needed to suit these needs and abilities. If a child takes substantially more or less than the suggested time to complete homework assignment, parents should contact the teacher. It is extremely important that parents communicate openly with their child's teacher whenever questions or concerns arise over any educational issue.

When homework is assigned, we expect children to complete it. If a child does not finish assignments with regularity, a homework slip will be sent to the parents explaining the child's options to make up missed assignments. In grades three through six children will have a homework grade on their report card to provide evidence of their ability to complete assignments in an accurate and timely manner. In this way, we are working to help children succeed in the handling of their responsibilities. We also encourage students to arrange with their teacher a schedule for completing incomplete or overdue assignments. This initiative on the part of students serves to further reinforce their acceptance of responsibility for their own schoolwork.

The staff at Westhampton Elementary School will, in turn, strive to make homework assignments at all grade levels appropriate and relevant to the work being done in class. We will also monitor the amount of homework that is given in an attempt to keep assignments consistent with the guidelines stated above. In addition, teachers will try to make certain that all necessary directions and materials for completing homework are sent home with children at the time that the assignment is given.

By working together cooperatively, parents, students and teachers can make homework a productive, practical part of the educational process at Westhampton Elementary School.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of the Westhampton Elementary School community have the right to work and learn in a safe and secure environment. To do this, we all have responsibilities to behave with courtesy and respect. All members of the Westhampton Elementary School community should treat others as they would like to be treated.

Our responsibilities include:

- To express one's own ideas, opinions and feelings and to listen respectfully to others
- To respect school, personal and other's property
- To do one's best and support others
- To accept responsibility for one's actions

Many children will learn these responsibilities through instruction in the Responsive Classroom and by working with caring adults who model these traits on a daily basis.

Consequences for violations to the code of conduct

We understand that people don't always behave in the ways they know they should. When violations to the code of conduct occur, there are logical consequences. Consequences depend on the age of the child, the seriousness of the offense, and whether it is a first time or repeated offense. Certain violations are considered **more serious**. These include *fighting, intentional destruction of school property, foul language, refused to follow adult directions, and intimidation and harassment of others*. When more serious behaviors occur, the following steps will be taken:

1. The adult who observed the offense communicates with the classroom teacher and the principal.
2. The adults brainstorm and invoke consequences that are logical, reasonable, and related to the behavior involved.

3. Parents will be informed of their child's behavior and the consequences by a note or phone call.
4. Certain situations may require the writing of a behavior plan in consultation with the parents or guardians, who sign and return the plan.
5. In extreme circumstances, where students may be a danger to themselves or those around them, the school may deem it necessary to send a child home.

Repeated misbehavior may require additional consequences, which are discussed between the principal and parent or guardian. Possible replacement costs for damaged property may be required.

Note: Certain behaviors are major offenses (such as physical aggression, use of drugs or alcohol, or possession of weapons) and may lead to suspension.

This is the Manifestation Determination Procedure that will be followed for the discipline of students with disabilities at the Westhampton Elementary School.

It is the intention of the Westhampton Elementary School to meet all compliance standards and to observe all federal guidelines in addressing the discipline of students with disabilities. Including regulation changes contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, amendments of 2004 (IDEA-04). Discipline of students with a disability is now governed by these federal regulations.

- Students with disabilities may be disciplined in the same manner as non-disabled peers for up to 10 **school** days in the same school year, as long as the removal does not constitute a change of placement.
- If suspension of a disabled student will constitute a change of placement (including expulsion or removal to a 45-day interim alternative educational setting) the Principal will convene relevant members of the student's IEP TEAM to conduct a review of the IEP.
- The IEP TEAM will (within 10 **school** days of the occurrence of the behavioral incident in question) determine if the misconduct was a

manifestation of the student's disability.

- The parent shall receive written invitation to the manifestation team determination. In making this determination the TEAM must consider all relevant information in the student's file, including:
 - The IEP
 - Any teacher observations
 - Any relevant information provided by the parent
1. The results of the TEAM meeting will be used by the principal in conducting the disciplinary hearing. The Director of Pupil Services or other SPED representative from the TEAM will be present at any hearing to present his/her findings.
 2. If the IEP TEAM decided the misconduct was related to the student's disability (i.e. if the conduct was caused by or had a substantial relationship to the child's disability, or if the conduct was a direct result of the LEA's failure to fully implement the IEP) the student will not be expelled or suspended for more than 10 school days (**EXCEPTIONS:** A student carries or possesses a weapon, inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person, or knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state or local educational).
 3. Special education services will be provided in the new placement during the period of suspension or expulsion.
 4. In all cases involving a change in placement that occurs as a result of a disciplinary procedure, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) will take place. The TEAM will assess the student's behavior and develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) or review and modify any existing plan as necessary.
 5. If the parents do not agree to a change in placement or with the manifestation determination, they may request a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.
 6. In special circumstances, IDEA 2004 allows for a change in placement regardless of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability. This placement is to an Interim Alternative Education Setting

(IAES) for a period up to but not to exceed 45 **school** days. However, a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), including provision of all IEP services, must be provided at such a site. A 45-day placement can occur in the following circumstances:

- a. A student carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state or local educational agency. (**Weapon:** a device, instrument, material or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade less than 2 _ inches, as defined in 18 USC, Section 930).
- b. A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state or local educational agency. (**Controlled substance:** does not include a substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health care professional or used under any another authority provided by federal law.)
- c. A student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state or local educational agency. (**Serious bodily injury:** is bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, *extreme physical pain*, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty, as defined in 18 USC, Section 930).
- d. BSEA hearing officer may order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days, if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

The Westhampton School District is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if:

1. The parent expressed concern, in writing, to supervisory or administrative personnel or the child's teacher that the child is in need of services.

2. The parent has requested an evaluation.
3. The teacher of the child or other LEA personnel has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior directly to the director of special education or other supervisory personnel.

Under the revised Act, an LEA does not have knowledge, if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, has refused services, or the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability. If there is no prior knowledge of disability, the following applies:

- The student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures as those applied to children without disabilities.
- If a request is made for an evaluation during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation will be conducted in an expedited manner.
- Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by the school.
- In specific instances students with disabilities can be suspended for more than 10 school days in a school year while remaining in their current placement. The days of suspension beyond the 10 school days may not constitute a change of placement occurs if:

- a. the removal is for 10 consecutive school days
 - b. the student has been subject to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because the removals aggregately amount to more than 10 school days in a school year
 - c. the child's behavior is substantially similar to the child's behavior in the incidents that resulted in the series of removals, taken cumulatively is determined to have been a manifestation of the child's disability, and such other factors such as length of each removal, total amount of time removed and the proximity of removals to one another (300.536 IDEA).
- Students who are removed more than 10 school days yet do not constitute a change in placement will receive services to the extent necessary to enable the pupil to appropriately progress in the general

curriculum, as well as advance toward achieving their IEP goals.

- Provision for services during the first 10 school days of removal are not required; however, provision of services for each day beyond the first 10 school days are required under IDEA-04. At least one of the child's teachers will determine the extent to which services are needed, if any, and the location in which the services will be provided.

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR

The counselor's job includes consulting with parents and teachers about the academic progress and social-emotional development of children as individuals and in relation to others. This is accomplished through individual and group counseling, social skills training with students, classroom developmental guidance programs, and facilitation of home and school communication. The counselor is available as a liaison among families, the school, and community services. Please call the school if you would like an appointment with the counselor.

REMEDIAL LANGUAGE ARTS

The school currently employs one certified teacher who works as a tutor during the school day in grades 1 - 6 in the areas of reading and writing (which includes spelling). Classroom teacher recommendations and standardized testing are used as the basis for the selection of students who will receive this support. Parental permission is required before a student begins working with the language arts teacher.

READING RECOVERY

The goal of the Reading Recovery Program is to supplement classroom reading instruction with early intervention support for at-risk first grade students. This program was implemented in September, 1997.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Under Chapter 766, a state law, and P.L. 94-142, a federal law, children ages 3 to 21 inclusive with special needs are eligible for special education services. Our goal is to include children with special needs within the regular classroom whenever possible. Parent involvement is required and welcomed. Parents are vital members of the team which determines each child's needs and subsequent educational plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are required by law to take physical education. If your child cannot participate for an extended period of time, we must receive a note from a doctor. Parents are strongly urged to provide their children with sneakers/gym shoes. This will be the only footwear allowed when we use the gymnasium. Each year students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 take part in the President's National Physical Fitness Program. This program and subsequent tests are designed to measure strength, speed, and agility.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Children are encouraged to participate in the lunch program, which can help them learn good nutritional habits and the easy acceptance of food variety. Our school lunch program operates each regular school day and is planned to meet one-third of the daily dietary requirements set by the state office. It consists of protein foods, fruits and/or vegetables, bread, butter, energy-building foods, and one-half pint of milk daily. Iron, Vitamin C, and Vitamin A needs are met. Menus must fit state and federal requirements within a strict operating budget and are expected to include a balance of color, texture, and flavor, as well as variety.

The current charge to students is \$2.50 a day, payable weekly. We strongly urge every student to pay on Mondays. Weekly menus are published in the Daily Hampshire Gazette and monthly menus are sent home each month. A child may order lunch for individual days or the entire week. A credit is given in the case of absence. Free and reduced price lunches are available to those students who meet the financial requirements. Applications can be obtained from the principal. Students may bring a box lunch from home and purchase milk. The current cost is \$.50 per half pint, also payable on Mondays.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus drivers expect students to be at their stops by the designated time and follow bus safety rules. Bus transportation will be denied to any student with repeated infractions of the rules. [NO: fighting; pushing, shoving, or "horseplay" in general; damaging property; swearing, yelling or other distracting behavior; insubordination].

Whenever there is a change in a child's transportation [including walkers], the school must be notified in writing. If this change is on a regular weekly or monthly basis, then a single note will be sufficient for the school year.

Walkers, bicycle riders, and children dropped off by parents should not arrive at school before 8:15 A.M. Supervision is provided at that time.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

If there is no school or a delayed opening, the superintendent will send an automated telephone message using the Connect.ed system. It will be also be announced over radio stations WHMP, WHYN, WTTT, WNNZ, WMAS, WPKX, WRNX, WRSI, WPVQ, and WAQY. Television stations WWLP [Channel 22] and WGGB [Channel 40] will also broadcast these announcements. In addition cancellations may be found on the call-in Gazette Line or internet website, *cancellation.com*. In the event we would close school early, although it is unlikely, this information will be announced over the same stations. Parents should inform the school and their children of the proper place to go in case school is dismissed early.

LIBRARY

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of our library. Specific information on our book borrowing policy is sent to parents early in the school year.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

There is an active P.T.O. that usually meets monthly during the school year. Parents and teachers are invited to attend any of the meetings. The purpose of the P.T.O. is to provide support and enhance the quality of education for all students.

NO SMOKING POLICY

We are smoke free. Smoking and use of tobacco are not permitted inside the building or on the school grounds.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Please observe the one-way traffic signs. During school hours cars must turn by the mailbox and not go around the island, which is for buses only.

Parents who drive their children to school in the morning should drop them off at the sidewalk ramp next to the handicapped parking spaces. Students will then use the concrete walkway as they proceed to the rear playground.

Parents picking up their children at the end of the day should use the parking spaces adjacent to the sidewalk. Please try to arrive before the 3:00 dismissal and do not park in handicapped spaces. Children will not be allowed to walk across the parking lot or driveway unless they are accompanied by an adult.

VISITING SCHOOL

We welcome visitors and take pride in being accessible to parents. Teachers would appreciate advance notice if you wish to visit their classrooms. Informal visits with the teaching staff should take place during non-instructional times. In addition, teachers have a scheduled block of time each week that they will be available to meet with parents. Schedules for individual teachers will be posted in the newsletter.