

## 2009-2010 HANDBOOK RECEIPT

This page must be signed by the student and returned to their seminar teacher during the first week of school. This student's signature is evidence that he/she has received the 2009-2010 student handbook and has been informed that students are expected to abide by all the regulations, rules, and student responsibilities held within its pages.

It is the responsibility of the student to share the contents of this handbook with his or her parent(s) or guardian(s).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This handbook is the property of WOHS. Each student is required to have one and in order to receive permission to leave class, the student is to present their handbook to the teacher for completion of the hallway pass.


Replacement handbooks are available for purchase at the reception desk.



# West Ottawa High School

**2009 - 2010**

North Building  
3685 Butternut Drive  
Holland, MI 49424



*Main Line:* (616) 994-5000  
*Counseling Office:* (616) 994-5017  
*Athletic Office:* (616) 994-5030  
*Main Office Fax:* (616) 994-1091

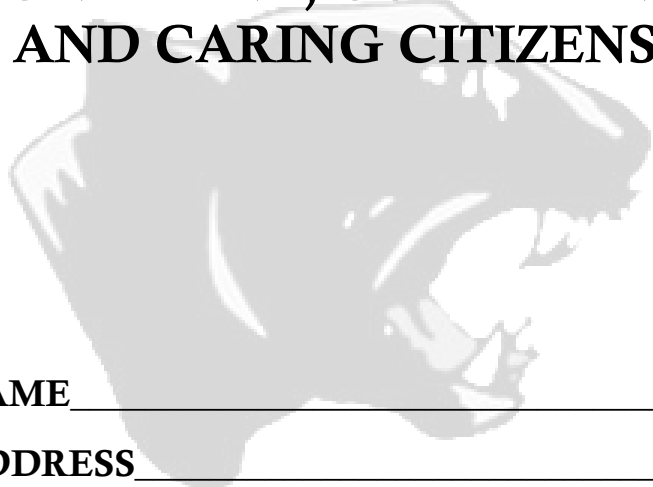
South Building  
3600 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Holland, MI 49424

*Main Line:* (616) 738-6700  
*Counseling Office:* (616) 738-6717  
*Athletic Office:* (616) 994-5030  
*Main Office Fax:* (616) 738-6791

*Web Address:* [www.westottawa.net](http://www.westottawa.net)

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**WEST OTTAWA HIGH  
SCHOOL WILL DEVELOP  
CONFIDENT, COMPETENT,  
AND CARING CITIZENS**



**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Absence Definitions.....	27	Gang Activity.....	17
Academic Integrity.....	2	Graduation Requirements...	5
Acceptable Use Policy.....	22	Illness during School Day...	29
Administrators.....	2	Law Enforcement Officers..	13
Age of Majority.....	9	Library.....	10
Alma Mater.....	31	Locker Usage.....	10
Areas of Authority.....	12	Lng Trm Susp/Expulsions..	25
Athletics.....	6	Lost and Found.....	11
Attendance Appeal.....	29	National Honor Society.....	7
Attendance Philosophy...	26	New Rule Implementation..	12
Attendance Policy.....	26	Non-Discrimination.....	19
Attendance Procedures...	26	Obligation List.....	10
Bully Behavior.....	20	Parking/Driving Privileges.	11
Campus Supervision.....	13	Responsible Thinking Proc	24
Cell Phones.....	23	School Spirit.....	2
Citizenship.....	3	Search & Seizure Policy.....	18
Cheating/Plagiarism.....	22	Seminar Attendance.....	28
Closed Campus Policy.....	20	Sexual Harassment.....	19
Extra Curricular Coord....	7	Smoking.....	21
Co-op.....	3	Snap Suspensions.....	25
Counselors.....	3	Student Appearance.....	23
Credit Recovery.....	29	Student Code of Conduct...	14
Credit Structure.....	4	Student Expression.....	9
Dances.....	13	Student IDs.....	13
Detention/Sat School.....	24	Student Scheduling.....	3
Deliveries.....	12	Student Senate.....	7
Display of Affection.....	22	Student Services.....	10
District Mission Statement	2	Suspension.....	25
District Belief Statement...	2	Tardy Policy.....	28
Drugs/Alcohol.....	21	Textbooks.....	10
Due Process.....	25	Theft.....	21
Electronic Devices.....	23	Threats/Acts of Violence...	17
Emergency Procedures...	6	Transportation Services.....	14
Equal Opportunity.....	9	Visitors.....	12
Food and Drink.....	23	Weapons/Rape/Arson.....	16
Gambling.....	22		

## DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

West Ottawa Public Schools, a caring community of learners, challenging and inspiring students to learn and succeed in a diverse world.

## DISTRICT BELIEF STATEMENT

As the heart of our community, West Ottawa Public Schools

- Ensures a safe and secure environment
- Honors diversity
- Inspires change
- Delivers quality and challenging programs
- Motivates students to succeed

## ADMINISTRATORS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ❖ Mr. Kent Henson, Principal  | ❖ Don Clavette, Assistant<br>Principal – North Building       |
| ❖ Ms. Amy Dickinson,<br>Assistant Principal – South                       | ❖ Mr. Todd Tulgestke, Assistant<br>Principal – North Building |
| ❖ Mr. Jens Milobinski,<br>Assistant Principal - North &<br>South Building | ❖ Mr. Ron Allen, Athletic<br>Director                         |

School administrators want to help each student to be successful. Students are therefore encouraged to see an administrator if they have concerns with teachers, staff, or students, want an answer to a question, or simply wish to have someone listen to their concerns.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The administration and teaching staff believe that students have a significant responsibility in the area of honesty and integrity regarding all schoolwork. Teachers will do everything in their power to encourage individual effort from all students in their classrooms. Because of this belief, students who are caught cheating will face a variety of consequences ranging from failure of the work in question to loss of credit for the class.

## SCHOOL SPIRIT

School spirit, though it cannot be seen or touched, is the most valuable quality that has been handed down by those who have attended our school before the current time.

- *It is our fans cheering our teams rather than degrading our opponents.*
- *It is our teachers smiling at their students as they enter their classes.*
- *It is our students being proud of their school, backing its worthy causes.*
- *It is keeping the grounds and buildings clean.*
- *It is making visitors feel welcome.*
- *It is the thrill of victory and the acceptance of honorable defeat.*
- *It is working together to make West Ottawa a good place for everyone.*

We have an obligation to continue to maintain school spirit. In turn, school spirit is our legacy to those who will follow us through these halls.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Students shall show proper respect at all times to fellow students, staff members, school employees, and members of the community. Both students and staff members have an obligation to maintain conditions that will promote the proper atmosphere for learning and for taking part in school activities.

### **COUNSELORS**

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ❖ Mrs. Carola VanHeukelom<br>North  | ❖ Mr. Phil Spreitzer<br>North/South |
| ❖ Mrs. Barbara Kiekintveld<br>North | ❖ Mrs. Jan Schaap South             |
| ❖ Ms. Kathy Wade North              | ❖ Mr. Mitch Veldkamp South          |

Services provided by the counseling department include, but are not limited to, the following: academic and personal counseling; advice to parents on educational and/or other issues; schedule planning; individualized educational plans; referrals to outside agencies, group counseling and support services; and consultations with teachers, school psychologists, and social workers. **To see a counselor, students can make appointments with the receptionist during their free time;** however, emergency situations will be given top priority. Counselors are assigned based on the first letter of a student's last name.

### **STUDENT SCHEDULING**

Information covering the procedures for selecting courses for the following year will be sent home. Counselors and teachers are available for academic advising prior to the deadline for selection of courses. A course description book with a list of suggested courses is also available as part of the registration process, as is information on-line at the WOPS website.

- Students may add and/or drop classes in the first three days of each trimester (after the allotted time, changes can only occur with administrative approval).
- Students are not permitted to drop a course to protect their GPA.
- Students must submit a request for teacher changes to an administrator for approval.

### **CO-OP**

Juniors (only as a sixth period) and Seniors may elect to include co-op as part of their course schedule.

- If a student is fired for good reason, he/she will receive an "F" for the trimester and will not be eligible to continue participating in the current program or in any future career program.

- If a student quits his/her job before the date specified on the training agreement, the student will receive an “F” for the trimester, lose credit for the course, and not be eligible to continue participating in the current program or future career programs.
- If a student loses a job for a reason beyond the student’s control, the student will be able to maintain credit if they follow the guidelines specified in the co-op contract.

Attendance: A student who is maintaining credit through instruction and job-seeking activities will be subject to the school attendance policy just as a student in any other class (refer to co-op contract).

### CREDIT STRUCTURE

The following tables summarize the credit structure utilized for academic promotion. During high school, **students are promoted to the next grade level based on the number of credits earned.**

### GRADE CLASSIFICATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

When	Total Credits Earned	Grade Classification
August – Beginning of the school year	Less than 6	<b>Freshman</b>
August – Beginning of the school year	From 6 to 12	<b>Sophomore</b>
August – Beginning of the school year	From 12.5 to 19	<b>Junior</b>
August – Beginning of the school year	19.5 or greater	<b>Senior</b>

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from West Ottawa High School means that a student has satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study in accordance with his/her respective abilities and has completed requirements as prescribed by the West Ottawa Board of Education and the State of Michigan. The educational program of the West Ottawa district is designed to be completed in thirteen years, culminating in the awarding of a diploma (see Student Code of Conduct for graduation exercises information). Whenever possible, the school district will provide opportunities for a student to complete the program within the prescribed thirteen years.

To qualify for a diploma under the usual conditions, a student must

1. Have been in attendance 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades or a minimum of twelve

- trimesters, or be able to verify thirteen years of school attendance.
2. In order to graduate early, students must meet board and state graduation requirements. Additionally, a student must submit an Early Graduation Application in the Main Office by **Feb 1**.
  3. Be enrolled in five subjects each trimester of the twelve required trimesters.
  4. Complete the minimum credits for graduation, including  
(1 unit = 2 trimesters)

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVED 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
STATUS FOR CLASS OF 2009/2010**

English 1	1 unit of credit
English 2	1 unit of credit
American Literature 1	0.5 unit of credit
Speech	0.5 unit of credit
Algebra	1 unit of credit
Geometry	1 unit of credit
U.S. History	1 unit of credit
World History	1 unit of credit
Biology	1 unit of credit
Chemistry	1 unit of credit
Government, Constitutional Law, AP Gov*	0.5 unit of credit
Electives	18.5 units of credit

*Credits from required classes:*           **9.5**

*Minimum credits to graduate:*       **28.0**

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2010**

English 1	1 unit of credit
English 2	1 unit of credit
American Literature 1	0.5 unit of credit
Speech	0.5 unit of credit
Algebra 1	1 unit of credit
Algebra 2A	0.5 unit of credit
Geometry	1 unit of credit
U.S. History	1 unit of credit
World History	1 unit of credit
Biology	1 unit of credit
Chemistry	1 unit of credit
Government, Constitutional Law, AP Gov	0.5 unit of credit
Electives	18.5 units of credit

*Credits from required classes:*           **10.0**

*Minimum credits to graduate:*      **28.0**

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2011-2013**

English 1 or Honors English 1	1 unit of credit
English 2 or Honors English 2	1 unit of credit
English 3 or Equivalent Honors, AP or Dual Enrollment	1 unit of credit
English 4 or Equivalent Honors, AP or Dual Enrollment	1 unit of credit
Algebra 1	1 unit of credit
Algebra 2	1 unit of credit
Geometry	1 unit of credit
Elective Math (during senior or final year)	1 unit of credit
Biology or Equivalent Honors or AP	1 unit of credit
Chemistry or Equivalent Honors or AP	1 unit of credit
Conceptual Physics, Physics, or AP Physics	1 unit of credit
U.S. History/Geography, Honors US History/Geography or AP Equivalent	1 unit of credit
World History/Geography, Honors World History/ Geography, or AP Equivalent	1 unit of credit
Economics or AP Economics	0.5 unit of credit
Government, Constitutional Law, or AP Government	0.5 unit of credit
Visual/Performing/Applied Arts	1 unit of credit
Successful Living	0.5 unit of credit
Physical Wellness Elective	0.5 unit of credit
Electives	12 units of credit
<i>Credits from required classes:</i>	<b>16.0</b>
<i>Minimum credits to graduate:</i>	<b>28.0</b>

Students must complete all academic requirements to receive a West Ottawa diploma. Under regular circumstances, students can earn eight (8) credits per year (7.5 from regular classes plus 0.5 from seminar.), totaling 32 credits during their high school career. All trimester classes count as 0.5 credits.

**THE PRINCIPAL MUST approve any deviations from the graduation requirements.**

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Information sheets stating directions to follow in the event of a tornado, fire drill, lock-down, or evacuation are posted in each classroom. Students will be notified of a fire alarm by a fire alarm system and a tornado alarm by a P.A. announcement. Attention and cooperation are necessary during all drills and emergencies. Teachers will give further instructions about leaving the building during emergencies. In case of an emergency, students must remember to be quiet and follow all instructions of teachers.

**ATHLETICS**

The athletic department's "Code of Conduct" includes rules and regulations governing the behavior of student-athletes. Disciplinary action that may result from violations of this code are in addition to and separate

from discipline that would result from violations of the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook. Students and parents may contact the athletic office if they wish to get a complete copy of the “Code of Conduct.”

Under the National Collegiate Athletic Association and Michigan High School Athletic Association bylaws, the use of performance enhancing drugs is prohibited by students. Because many supplements contain these banned drugs, students should review the list provided by NCAA and MHSAA. These bylaws are available in the Main and Athletic Offices.

### **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

Membership in the West Ottawa Chapter of the National Honor Society is open to junior and senior students. This honor is conferred upon them by the high school faculty in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in scholarship, character, service, and leadership. Equal importance is given to each of the four areas of achievement; therefore, a student must excel in all four areas.

In the fall of a student's Junior year, if he or she completed grade 10 with a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA (unweighted), that student will receive an invitation in the mail to apply for membership in the National Honor Society. The student will submit evidence of continued and varied activity in the school and greater community to indicate service and leadership. Students who successfully complete those steps will have their names submitted to WO staff for recommendations. If a student meets all requirements and chooses to join the National Honor Society, he or she pledges to uphold the four pillars of NHS, and perform service by agreeing to tutor students in seminar at least once per week for the duration of the school year.

### **STUDENT SENATE**

The purpose of West Ottawa High School student government shall be to promote the welfare of the students, to express the opinions and concerns of the student body, and to work to enhance and improve the school climate as they interact with the faculty, administration, and community of West Ottawa High School.

### **CO-/EXTRA-CURRICULAR COORDINATION**

The West Ottawa school district believes that a well-rounded school experience includes involvement in extra-curricular activities and encourages students to participate in a variety of school activities.

Recognizing that students who participate in multiple school activities may encounter scheduling conflicts which obligate them to more than one event, the following procedure has been established to assist in the resolution of

scheduling conflicts that occur:

1. When a conflict occurs between scheduled practices, the students may choose either activity.
2. When a conflict occurs between a competition/performance and a practice, students are expected to attend the competition/performance. Regular participation rules and expectations will prevail. In these situations, the student will not be allowed to participate in the practice.
3. When a conflict occurs between competitions/performances, the student must first consult with the adult advisors before the event to see if he/she can resolve the conflict or to show that one activity should take priority over the other.
  - a. If the advisors agree the student should attend one event over the other, the student must comply with their decision.
  - b. If the advisors agree both competitions/performances can be attended, the student is expected to attend both activities.
  - c. If the advisors remain undecided or do not establish the priority of one event over the other, the student may choose either activity.

It is recommended that the adult advisors consider the following in making their decisions:

- The overall importance of the conflicting events, such as state/regional/district/conference events versus regular events.
- The impact the student's absence will have on each team/group; *i.e.*, is the student a principal contributor (starter, first chair, soloist, etc.) or does he/she provide a secondary/back-up function?

In all situations where this policy has been followed and the student has ultimately made the decision, the advisors are expected to honor that decision and to support the student positively as he/she represents the school in the event. Repercussions to the student as a result of his/her decision, academic or otherwise, shall not occur and will not be supported. Adult advisors will make every effort to coordinate schedules annually to avoid scheduling conflicts.

## **TITLE IX**

The West Ottawa Board of Education, the administration, and the staff of the West Ottawa Public School District, Holland, Michigan, will continue to establish whatever rules and policy steps are necessary to assure non-discrimination on the basis of sex in all educational programs, curricular and extra-curricular activities, and employment practices which come

under the regulations of Title IX.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE**

It is the policy of this school district that all students shall have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all academic and extra-curricular activities and services. Thus, on the basis of sex, it will be a violation of policy for the district, board, administration, teachers, or other staff to:

1. Have different rules of conduct or means of punishing students.
2. Treat students differently in deciding whether they are entitled to services.
3. Provide different activities or similar services in a different manner.

### **AGE OF MAJORITY**

The Board of Education recognizes that students, upon the attainment of the age of majority (18), are afforded all the rights and privileges of adulthood. However, under Michigan law, school districts may establish reasonable regulations regarding age-of- majority students. A student interested in applying for the Age of Majority status may obtain a form from the North/South Main Office. Upon the return of the completed form, the student's attendance secretary will notify his or her guardian. At West Ottawa High School, all students are expected to adhere to the attendance and discipline policies regardless of age. Students are expected to be in all assigned classes or activities unless excused in the appropriate manner.

### **STUDENT EXPRESSION AND/OR PUBLICATIONS**

High school students are permitted to distribute publications authored by district students within a designated "Free Speech Zone." The designated location is in the South Building. Students shall not distribute such publications in classrooms, in hallways, or in any other manner on school property or at school-sponsored events. Students wishing to put information on bulletin boards must obtain approval from the administration. Students are subject to discipline (including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion) for inappropriate actions. Inappropriate actions include the publishing, distribution, or advertising of:

- materials which are lewd, profane, or obscene
- materials with threatening acts of violence toward a person or group of persons
- material with any product or service not permitted by law;
- material containing insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures or harasses other people;
- materials advocating unlawful acts or acts in violation of school rules

Students shall not circulate or distribute materials in exchange for any payment unless conducted and sponsored by an approved school organization.

### **LIBRARY**

The library program is designed to help students to develop their ability to find, generate, evaluate, and apply information that helps them to function effectively as individuals in society. Through the use of media, students will acquire and strengthen skills in reading, observing, listening, and communicating ideas. **Students will be expected to pay fines for damages that may occur while a book is checked out to them. In addition, students will be expected to pay the replacement cost of any book that they do not return.**

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Student Services is located in the receptionist area in each building. The receptionist handles lockers, lost and found items, student parking permits and drivers education registration.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

A textbook deposit is required from each student. Students are responsible for checking out textbooks from the textbook room and are required to pay for any damage done to books while checked out to them. In addition, students are expected to pay the replacement cost of books that are not returned including lost, stolen, or damaged books.

### **OBLIGATION LIST**

At the end of each trimester, students are required to satisfy all outstanding obligations prior to receiving their trimester report card, diploma, or a copy of their course transcript. Obligations include but are not limited to the following: course fees, musical instruments and uniforms, athletic equipment and uniforms, library materials, and textbooks. **Students with outstanding obligations will not be allowed to register for classes the following year.**

### **LOCKER USAGE**

**Lockers are the property of the school district.** A student is assigned to one locker for the duration of a school year for the purpose of storing school-related materials and such authorized personal items outer garments, footwear, grooming aids, and lunch. **All students are responsible for the contents of their lockers and should not divulge locker combinations to other students.**

- Students are to keep the interior and exterior of the locker clean and neat.
- Locker displays (photos, drawings, words, etc.) must be

appropriate for a school building. References or depictions of controlled substances (including advertisements, alcohol posters, etc.) are prohibited.

- Money or valuables should not be kept in lockers.
- Locker problems should be reported to the receptionist.

A student using a Band or Physical Wellness locker must provide a lock to be used during the trimester in which he or she is enrolled in a Band or Physical Wellness course. **Students are responsible for the contents of their lockers.**

Random searches of school lockers and their contents may be necessary to deter violations of school rules and regulations. School administrators may search for and seize items within the locker that violate Board policy.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

If a student finds articles in or around the school, he/she should turn them in to the receptionist. When appropriately identified, articles may be claimed by owners. If students cannot find a missing article, they should fill out a lost and found report form available from the receptionist. All athletic losses must be reported to the athletic director's office.

### **PARKING AND DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

**Driving is a privilege, not a right, and all vehicles must be registered.** West Ottawa High School will not assume liability for any theft, vandalism, or accidents that may occur on school property. The Ottawa County Sheriff's Department has the authority to ticket vehicles. Should school authority have reasonable suspicion that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside a vehicle, school personnel may search any vehicle on school property.

In order to register a vehicle with the school, a student must submit a parking fee and a completed driving registration application to the receptionist. Upon approval, the student will be issued a parking permit (sticker) to be displayed in the lower left corner (driver's side) of the windshield. The administration reserves the right to suspend the issuance of driving permits if parking space becomes limited.

**Being in the parking lot or vehicle during school hours without permission, driving between buildings during the school day, or underclassmen leaving campus for lunch will be subject to progressive discipline beginning with an assigned Saturday School.**

A consequence ranging from the removal of a student's parking permit, the loss of parking privileges, the towing of the vehicle, or the issuance of a traffic citation by Ottawa County Sheriff's Department will be administered

for driving and parking violations including:

- Parking and driving in undesignated areas (handicapped parking, non-student parking, and bus areas)
- Speeding and reckless driving
- Failing to register a vehicle with the school
- Failing to display the parking sticker properly
- Violating other traffic laws

### **VISITORS**

To maintain a safe and orderly environment at our school, visitors are monitored closely. All visitors to the building must sign in at the reception area. **Students are not permitted to have student visitors in the school.** Special accommodations may be made for unusual circumstances upon parent request. Parents should contact the administration to receive approval and make arrangements at least ten days prior to the visit. In most cases, visitors from neighboring districts will not be permitted. The administration reserves the right to refuse any visitation.

### **PERSONAL DELIVERIES**

Personal items (balloons, flowers, and gifts) delivered to the school must be left with the receptionist. These items must stay at the receptionist's desk during school hours. A student may pick these items up at the end of the school day.

### **AREAS OF AUTHORITY**

Assuming the authority granted to it by law (Sections 340.613 and 340.314 of the School Code), West Ottawa High School has established the following areas of authority over student conduct:

- ❖ While attending school
- ❖ While in a school vehicle
- ❖ While under the jurisdiction of the school (field trips, etc.)
- ❖ While on school grounds or during any other school-related events.

When the administration judges that a student's behavior adversely influences others, interferes with the educational process, or infringes on the rights of others, disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including suspension from school.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RIGHT TO IMPLEMENT NEW RULES**

The administration of West Ottawa High School reserves the right to establish rules and regulations which are not stated in this handbook but which are necessary and proper for carrying out the educational programs of the school and to ensure the safety of all West Ottawa High School students. When, in the judgment of the administration, a student's behavior adversely influences others or interferes with the educational process, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **CAMPUS SUPERVISION**

Students are to respect the property of the school and others, as well as the authority of teachers and school personnel. They are also to follow reasonable directions from them. **When asked by any staff member, a student must identify her/himself and/or accompany the staff member to the office of an administrator.** Students can expect mutual respect on the part of all school personnel.

West Ottawa High School will take appropriate measures to thwart theft or vandalism of personal property, school property, vehicles, or school grounds. Such measures as the electronic surveillance system and security personnel will be preventative in nature. When routine security measures reveal student violations, disciplinary action will be taken. If there is a violation of state law, appropriate authorities will be notified.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS**

It shall be the policy of the District that a reasonable cooperative effort is maintained between the school administration and law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement officials may be summoned in order to conduct an investigation of alleged criminal conduct on the school premises or during a school-sponsored activity or to maintain the educational environment. Law enforcement officials shall be contacted as required by the Michigan Revised School Code. They may also be summoned for the purpose of maintaining or restoring order when the presence of such officers is necessary to prevent injury to persons or property. Administrators have the responsibility and the authority to determine when the presence and assistance of law enforcement officers are necessary within their respective jurisdictions.

## **STUDENT IDS**

Students will be issued one photo ID at the beginning of the school year. **Students are required to have their IDs with them during the school day and at school events (including dances).** When requested, students are to display their ID to staff personnel. If the ID is defaced, lost, or damaged during the year, students are to purchase a replacement ID from their administrative office for \$3.00. Students who are in possession of specialized “swipe cards” are required to pay a \$7.00 replacement fee if the card is defaced, lost, or damaged by other than normal use.

## **DANCES**

Dances at West Ottawa are for the benefit of West Ottawa students and registered guests.

1. Only students in grades 9-12 are permitted to attend high school dances.
2. Parent chaperones have full authority.

3. Students are not permitted to re-enter a dance once they have left.
4. If a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, a parent/guardian will be called, and the student will be suspended from school.
5. No one will be admitted to the dance after 10:30 p.m.
6. Dances will typically end between 11:00 - 11:30 p.m.
7. **WOHS students and guests are required to show their CURRENT student ID cards to be admitted to dances.**
8. The school dress code policy and behavior expectations will be enforced.
9. Students must dance in a manner that is appropriate for a school setting. "Grinding", "moshing", and actions that are sexually suggestive will not be allowed.
10. Public display of affection will not be permitted.
11. WOHS students who wish to bring a guest to a dance must obtain a guest pass from an administrator prior to the end of school on Friday. The intent of the guest pass is to allow students to bring a date who attends another school. The intent is not to provide an opportunity for a group of students from another school to attend West Ottawa dances. 9<sup>th</sup> Graders will not be allowed to bring any guests to the homecoming dance. Each student is permitted only one guest, and guest passes are subject to the approval of the administration. **At formal and semi-formal dances, the guest must be under the age of twenty-one. For all other dances, the guest must be a regular high school student.**

### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

The West Ottawa Transportation Department has a tremendous responsibility for the care and safety of all students while they ride the bus to and from school. The safe, orderly, and efficient operation of each bus requires that students maintain proper personal conduct at all times. Time spent on buses is an extension of the school day; therefore, regulations and consequences that apply in school will continue to apply on the bus. A student whose conduct is viewed as jeopardizing the safety of others may result in suspension from riding the bus. In addition, gross misconduct on the bus may result in disciplinary action at school up to and including suspension.

### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Student Code of Conduct applies to any student who is on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or in a school vehicle. The Code also applies to a student's conduct at any time or place when or where it may interfere with or obstruct the mission or operation of the West Ottawa Public Schools, or the safety, welfare, or emotional well-being of students, visitors, or district employees.

Students are expected to be familiar with the Code of Conduct adopted by

the Board of Education. Copies of the Code are available in the principal's office. In addition, any conduct by a student, on or off district premises, which causes other students or employees to have reasonable fear for their physical safety or emotional well-being shall be the basis for short- or long-term suspension or expulsion from the West Ottawa Public Schools.

Generally, the district follows a system of progressive discipline, which is intended to assist students in developing the self-control necessary to comply with the Code of Conduct, Board policy, and state laws. This handbook, in some instances, describes the level of discipline that will be imposed for specific violations of this Code. However, the administration and the Board reserve the right to recommend or impose more serious discipline than that stated in this handbook in circumstances where there are aggravating factors or where the first-time violation is serious in nature. In other words, there may be circumstances in which the student's first-time offense is deemed so serious that long-term suspension or expulsion will be recommended.

Students may not engage in name-calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements based upon another student's race, color, national origin or ethnic background. Because such comments may precipitate the interruption or disruption of the school program, incite violence, or otherwise detract from the educational mission of the district, they are subject to disciplinary consequences, including, but not limited to, short- or long-term suspension or a recommendation for expulsion.

Participation in all extra-curricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right. Students are bound by the Board's policies, procedures, and roles governing participation in such activities. This extra-curricular involvement may require an even higher standard of conduct than is expected of all students under our Code of Conduct.

Student participation in graduation exercises is also a privilege, not a right. Senior students who violate Board policies and rules, in addition to the other discipline described in this Code of Conduct, may be subject to suspension from extra-curricular graduation activities such as commencement exercises.

**All West Ottawa students shall comply with the following rules:**

1. Students shall not engage in public displays of affection, which in any manner are detrimental to an atmosphere of learning.
2. Students shall not use tobacco products in any form on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at any school-related activity.
3. Students shall not possess, use, dispense, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs on school premises or at school activities, except as may be prescribed by a physician.
4. Students shall not throw any objects, which may in any way injure a person or property.
5. Students shall not cause or engage in fighting, physical attacks, or threats against other students, school employees, or other adults. In

addition, they shall not use profane language or display vulgar behavior.

6. Students shall not possess a weapon of any kind, any explosive device (including fireworks,) or commit arson in a school building or on the school grounds or rape someone in a building or on school grounds (reference: Section 1311 of Public Acts of 1976, as amended).
7. Students shall not misuse or destroy school property.
8. Students shall not engage in solicitation or distribution of any material without prior approval of the principal.
9. Students shall not loiter in the restroom areas or in other areas in school buildings or on school sites.
10. Students shall conduct themselves in a lawful manner and shall not engage in any conduct which is in violation of federal or state laws, local ordinances, or safety and fire codes, including theft, extortion, and possession of weapons or explosives.
11. Students shall not drive a motor vehicle on school property except as permitted under the heading of "Student Driving" in the *High School Handbook*.
12. Students shall abide by the rules regarding the use of school property.
13. Students shall adhere to the rules and procedures regarding attendance and tardiness.
14. Students shall not engage in any act or conduct which tends to disrupt the atmosphere of learning.

*\* ANY VIOLATION OF LOCAL, STATE, OR FEDERAL LAWS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES FOR POSSIBLE PROSECUTION.*

### **DANGEROUS WEAPONS/RAPE/ARSON**

*The Board of Education will not tolerate the possession of weapons or look-alike weapons by anyone while on school property or at a district-related event. Any item may be considered a weapon if the intent is to injure, threaten, or disable.*

A student found to be in possession of a dangerous weapon/firearm or a student who commits arson or rape on district grounds, in district buildings, or at school/district sponsored events shall be permanently expelled from school and referred to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system and the appropriate county department of social services or community mental health agency. The parent, legal guardian, and/or student shall also be notified of the referral.

This policy is in compliance with the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 {20 USC 3351} as amended by P.L. 103-382 {Section 14601, Part F} and MCL-380.1311.

## **GANG ACTIVITY**

Gang activity is defined as individual or group behaviors associated with belonging to a band of youths which promotes juvenile delinquency and which has an adverse effect on the school and learning environment. **Students shall not engage in behaviors at school, on school property, or at school-related activities that promote "gang" activity or gang-like activity.** This includes:

1. Wearing clothing or other apparel, such as bandannas of any type (for both male and female students), or altering one's appearance to indicate gang affiliation.
2. Wearing beads, earrings, or other jewelry that denotes gang colors or symbols.
3. Using hand signals that communicate gang activity.
4. Exhibiting such violent behaviors as fighting, shouting confrontations, individual or group conflicts ("stand-offs").
5. Possessing weapons as described in state law regarding prohibition of "weapons" in school.
6. Displaying gang symbols/graffiti on one's body, clothes, possessions, vehicle, school locker, or other school property.
7. Wearing gang colors.
8. Being involved in any other activities deemed to be gang-related.

The administration reserves the right to determine which behaviors, dress, or activities are gang-related. Offenses will result in disciplinary action up to and including a recommendation for expulsion. Students who are found to be involved in gang activities may be placed on a "Gang and Violence Contract." This contract will remain in effect for the entire time the student is enrolled in the West Ottawa Public School District.

## **THREATS AND/OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE**

Threats and/or acts of violence are extremely disruptive to the educational environment for all students and will not be tolerated at West Ottawa High School. It is a priority of this administration to maintain a safe environment for everyone. We believe that all threats or acts of violence can be avoided and that conflicts can be resolved peacefully. The administration will investigate all reports of threats or acts of violence.

### **Physical Assault**

***Student to Adult:*** Physical assaults on school employees, volunteers, or contractors will result in the expulsion of the student. This action is similar to the mandatory expulsion for dangerous weapons, CSC, and arson. Expulsion is from ALL Michigan public schools, other than "strict discipline academies" and appropriate alternative education programs.

***Student to Student:*** Physical assaults by a student upon another student will result in suspension of the offending student from school. If it is determined that both parties are in part responsible for an act of violence, both will be suspended from school. This includes any assaults occurring when under the authority of the school (see "Areas of Authority"). A student committing an assault may be expelled for up to 180 school days.

#### **Verbal Assault**

Verbal assault means (1) making a bomb threat or similar threat directed against a school building, school property, or a school-related event; or (2) making a verbal threat of serious bodily injury directed to or at a District employee, volunteer, or contractor which threat creates a well-founded fear or apprehension that the student has the apparent ability and means to immediately, or in the immediate future, inflict serious bodily injury on the District employee, volunteer, or contractor, if the student is not prevented from doing so. Any student who commits a "verbal assault" against a school employee, volunteer, or contractor may be expelled. A student expelled for verbal assault may enroll in another district; however, that district is not required to enroll the student even if educational residence is established. The length of expulsion may be up to 180 days. A progressive course of disciplinary action will be followed for students making threats to other students.

### **STUDENT RESPONSE DURING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Students must not obstruct school personnel during a crisis situation such as a medical emergency or a physical altercation. Students are expected to immediately leave the area and not contribute negatively to the situation. **Students who interfere with the efforts of school personnel will be subject to disciplinary action.**

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY**

The Board of Education has charged school authorities with the responsibility of safeguarding the safety and well being of the students in their care. In the discharge of that responsibility, school authorities may search school property such as student lockers or the person or property, including vehicles, in accordance with Board Policy #5771.

#### **PERSONAL SEARCHES**

A student and/or his/her personal effects (*e.g.*, purse, book bag, etc.) may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials.

#### **LOCKER SEARCHES**

School authorities may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

#### AUTOMOBILE SEARCHES

Students are permitted to park on school premises **as a matter of privilege, not of right**. The interior of a student's vehicle may be inspected without a search warrant whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside.

If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition. The district maintains its right to conduct random, unannounced canine searches in order to provide and maintain a safe and orderly school environment. **A student's failure to permit searches as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.**

#### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES**

Sexual harassment and non-discrimination is unlawful under both Michigan and federal law and is contrary to the commitment of the West Ottawa Public Schools to provide an effective learning environment. District policies prohibit sexual harassment and discrimination (Policy 5517) of students, employees, volunteers, contractors, or applicants for employment by students, employees, Board members, volunteers, or contractors. The district will not tolerate sexually harassing or discriminatory behavior as defined by law and/or by district policy, false reports of discrimination and/or sexual harassment, or retaliation against persons reporting allegations of sexual harassment or cooperating in the investigation of such complaints.

Any student who believes she/he has been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination shall verbally report the offense to any school employee with whom she/he feels comfortable or to the Civil Rights Compliance Officer located in the Administration Office of Student Services whose office phone number is (616)738-5720. The employee receiving the verbal report shall immediately complete a Harassment or Non-Discrimination Report Form and forward it to the building principal. Upon receipt of the Harassment or Non-Discrimination Report Form, the building principal shall immediately notify the designated district/central office administrator of the incident. The building principal shall then form an investigation team. Once the team receives the Harassment or Non-Discrimination Report Form, it shall complete an investigation, make a determination, and recommend the remedial steps necessary, if warranted, to stop the sexual harassing or discriminating behavior. The team shall submit all investigative documentation and its determination and recommendations, in writing, to the building principal or supervisor.

The principal or supervisor shall notify the complainant and the alleged harasser, in writing, of the investigation team's findings. If no harassment or discrimination has been found, the notification must show objective,

clearly stated evidence to justify that conclusion. If harassment has been substantiated, the building principal or supervisor shall seek the victim's input on what she/he thinks would be the most effective remedies, meet with the superintendent's designee to determine the corrective remedy/remedies to be taken and begin implementing it/them, periodically monitor the situation by checking with both the victim and the perpetrator regarding the success of the remedy/remedies, and document all information in the case file.

### **BULLYING AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying substantially interferes with a student's education benefits, opportunities, or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, or school-provided transportation, or at any official school bus stop. Bullying occurs when a person willingly and repeatedly exercising power or control through verbal, physical, or psychological means over another person with hostile or malicious intent.

Students may not engage in name-calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements based upon another student's race, color, national origin, or ethnic background. Because such comments may precipitate the interruption or destruction of the school program, incite violence, or otherwise detract from the educational mission of the district, they are subject to disciplinary consequences, including, but not limited to, short- or long-term suspension, or a recommendation for expulsion.

Additionally, bullying may also involve the use of technology such as email, cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or polling websites that repeatedly intend to harm others.

Any form of bullying will not be tolerated by the school. A student who believes he or she is a victim of bullying or witnesses another student being bullied should report the situation to a school official. Detailed information on bullying and aggressive behavior is located in Board Policy 5517.01.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS POLICY AND OFF-LIMIT AREAS**

Students are not allowed to leave high school property during the school day without permission from an administrator (this includes driving between the buildings). Seniors are permitted to leave campus only during their lunchtime without signing out in the building office. Seniors leaving campus will be responsible to their parents. ***Students are only to be on designated outdoor walkways during passing time or lunch.*** Additionally, **parking lots and athletic areas are off-limits during the school day.**

If a student is off-campus or in any off-limits area without authorization during the school day, he/she may be suspended or may receive another

appropriate consequence. Students are not allowed to "visit" any non- high school WOPS buildings during the school day.

### **DRUG-FREE SCHOOL POLICY**

West Ottawa High School is a Drug-Free School which in accordance with Federal Law, prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs by students on school grounds, in school or school-approved vehicles, or at any school-related event. Drug related items include:

- alcoholic beverages
- anabolic steroids
- dangerous controlled substance as defined by State statute
- substance that could be considered a "look-a-like" controlled substance
- drug paraphernalia

Violations will be referred to the appropriate authorities, and students will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

#### **Medication**

Prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications may not be carried by students or stored in lockers. **If a student requires access to this type of medication during the school day, the drugs may be maintained and distributed in their building's office once a parent has submitted the appropriate consent form.** Medications must be in their original containers. Students found in possession of medications may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **SMOKING POLICY**

Student **use or possession** of tobacco products or paraphernalia is not permitted on school property at any time. (This includes chewing tobacco products.) Failure to abide by this rule will result in suspensions and referral to the law enforcement agency.

Additionally, the administration may choose to refer the smoking violation to the appropriate law enforcement agency for further action.

### **THEFT**

Students must secure (in a locked locker) their personal items. Students shall not engage in theft or be in possession of stolen property. Consequences for theft are:

- 1st offense--Suspension for up to ten (10) days. Possible police referral. Restitution.
- 2nd offense --Suspension for up to ten (10) days, possibly long-term suspension. Police referral. Restitution.

## **GAMBLING**

Any participation in games of chance for money and/or other items of value is forbidden on school property (including buses). Items will be confiscated and appropriate measures will be taken.

## **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Cheating is when a person misleads, deceives, or acts dishonestly on purpose. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which one person steals another person's ideas or words and falsely presents them as the plagiarist's own product. There are many forms of plagiarism, including but not limited to:

- using the exact language of someone else without the use of quotation marks and without giving proper credit to the author
- presenting the sequence of ideas or arranging the material of someone else even though the material is expressed in one's own words, without giving appropriate acknowledgment
- submitting an assignment created or written by someone else but representing it as one's own.

The administration and teaching staff believe that students have a significant responsibility in the area of honesty and integrity regarding all schoolwork. Teachers will do everything in their power to encourage individual effort from all students in their classrooms. Because of this belief, students who are caught plagiarizing or cheating will face a variety of consequences ranging from failure of the work in question, to loss of credit for the class, to long-term suspension.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (Technology)**

The district's Acceptable Use Policy lists the privileges and responsibilities for using the school district's technology. Each student will receive a copy of the code to read and discuss with a parent/guardian. A signed copy of the code must be returned to the school before a student's ID to the computer network will be activated. Students who violate the Code of Ethics will be disciplined, up to and including removal of access to the computer system. Further disciplinary action may also be taken.

## **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

Public displays of affection (such as kissing or other intimate interaction) are unacceptable and do not belong in the school setting. If such behavior is exhibited, the administrative response will include progressive discipline.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Personal respect for school property and for the appearance of the building promotes a culture of excellence. Everyone needs to support these expectations. Students can assist by picking up litter they see around the building. In all carpeted areas of the buildings food is not permitted and the only allowed beverage is water.

## STUDENT APPEARANCE

*The administration is responsible for interpreting the appropriateness of student attire.* Excellence begins with everyone being clean and suitably dressed for school. Therefore, any attire/displays that are not conducive to an educational setting or are contrary to the goals of the West Ottawa School District are not permitted. Examples of inappropriate items include tight or revealing garments that expose too much skin, excessively short shorts, or clothing that interrupts daily student life, implies hate/violence/intimidation towards others or creates discord among the student body. Also, any clothing or items that imply an obscenity or are related to drugs, alcohol, gangs, or tobacco will not be allowed at school. Hats (or any other head covering) must not be worn in the buildings.

**Listed below are guidelines to clarify dress expectation:**

- No clothing revealing bare midriffs
- Tops and bottoms must overlap
- No strapless or spaghetti straps (acceptable straps must be two inches wide)
- No clothing revealing visible underwear
- No short skirts and dresses (acceptable skirts and dresses must be long enough to touch the tip of the middle finger when the arm is fully extended)
- No short shorts (acceptable shorts must be long enough to touch the tip of the thumb when the arm is fully extended).
- No clothing exposing excessive cleavage
- No transparent clothing
- No sagging pants (acceptable pants must have the waistband at waist level).
- No clothing that implies lewd, profane, or obscene material
- No clothing that pertain to drugs, alcohol, gangs, or tobacco
- No hats and other head apparel (acceptable after school hours)

## CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Cell phones and personal media devices (iPODS, CD players, MP3 players, video games, etc.) may be used on the campus, but are prohibited from

being on and/or used during class time, in the classroom setting, or during assemblies, meetings, etc. Violation will result in confiscation without warning. Hall and cafeteria use is permitted during passing time and/or lunch. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices (electronic communication devices) in locker rooms is prohibited. Parents or guardians must come to school to pick up phones and personal electronic devices.

Possession of a cell phone or other electronic devices by a student is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise engaged in misuse of this privilege.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action against the student which will result in confiscation of the cell phone or ECD, as well as action up to and including suspension.

**The students who possess a cell phone or electronic devices shall assume sole responsibility for its care. At no time shall the district be responsible for preventing theft, loss, or damage to cell phones or ECD's brought onto its property.**

### **RESPONSIBILITY THINKING PROCESS**

The Responsible Thinking Center is designed to help students develop a sense of responsibility for their own lives and respect for everyone around them. When students have difficulties getting along with others in school, or when they disrupt in class or other school settings, the student can be referred to RTC to work with the supervisor in devising an effective plan for resolving the issue that has caused the referral. When a plan has been devised, the referring staff member and the student must come to a consensus on the plan before the student may return to the classroom.

### **DETENTION OR SATURDAY SCHOOL POLICY**

Detention/Saturday School may be assigned by school personnel in a case where a student has violated student conduct rules such as not attending an assigned detention.

1. Sessions will be scheduled by the administrators or their designees (*i.e.*, teachers, campus security officers).
2. Students must have appropriate study materials with them.
3. Students are responsible for transportation to and/or from detention.
4. Missing a detention without permission or being asked to leave a detention session because of behavior will result in a Saturday School.
5. Missing Saturday School without permission, accumulating more than two sessions of owed Saturday School time, or being asked to leave a Saturday School session because of behavior will result in a suspension from school in accordance with district policy.



## SNAP SUSPENSIONS

A teacher is permitted to suspend a student from class for up to one class period when a student engages in any of the following acts: physical aggression towards himself/herself or others; profane or vulgar comments (oral or written) toward the classroom teacher, district employees, or other students during class time; and/or inappropriate physical contact of a sexual nature. The student will not return to the classroom that day without the mutual agreement of the teacher and the principal. The teacher will ask the student's parent/guardian to attend a conference as soon as possible. If requested by the parent or the teacher, an administrator will be present. A school counselor, psychologist, or social worker may also be in attendance.

## SUSPENSION

Major violations of the Student Code of Conduct will result in suspension. Building level administrators will determine the length of the suspension (from 1-10 days). The parents/guardians will be notified of the action taken and will have complete custody of their child during the suspension. The student will be readmitted to school after a satisfactory solution to his/her conduct is agreed upon by the student, parent/guardian, and administrator. The suspension period is from the first day of suspension until the student is scheduled to be re-admitted to school. Schoolwork will be provided to students when requested by their administrative secretary if the suspension is for three or more days, and they will receive credit for work completed. **During a suspension students are not allowed to be on school property or to attend any school-related activities unless given specific permission by an administrator. If found on campus, a suspended student will be charged with trespassing.**

## LONG-TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Long-term suspension means the exclusion of a student from school for a period in excess of ten school days and including permanent expulsion. The Board of Education and/or its Superintendent designee shall have authority to suspend a student for a long-term suspension in cases involving persistent, malicious, or willful violation of the rules of conduct or involving gross misbehavior.

## DUE PROCESS

Students have a right to due process whenever they are subject to any serious disciplinary action, such as, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion. If a student or his/her parent/guardian feels that his/her rights have been violated, a written appeal must be submitted to the building principal within 30 days of the original disciplinary action. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, he/she may appeal to the superintendent, the local Board of Education, and the State Board of Education, in that order.

## ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Education believes that regular attendance is required for promotion and success in schoolwork and that excessive absences negatively affect a student's academic performance and the overall classroom environment. Participation in classroom activities, discussions, lab experiences, and certain other interactions are beneficial for everyone in the classroom and are all necessary ingredients of the learning process. Therefore, the West Ottawa Board of Education has determined that students may accumulate no more than eight absences per class period for each trimester in order to receive sufficient exposure to these vital learning components and qualify for credit in a class--provided all other classroom objectives have been met satisfactorily. Both students and parents share responsibility for regular and prompt attendance.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

*The West Ottawa Board of Education, pursuant to the authority granted by the statutes of the State of Michigan, has adopted district Attendance Policy 5115, which sets forth certain attendance requirements for students of the West Ottawa Public Schools and establishes procedures and sanctions concerning those requirements. In order to facilitate the efficient functioning of that policy, the Board of Education resolves the following:*

- 1. The building principal is charged with the responsibility and given the authority to interpret and enforce district Attendance Policy 5115.*
- 2. The building principal shall have the authority to order the suspension or removal from school of a student who is in violation of district Attendance Policy 5115, subject always to the ultimate power of the Board of Education to hear and decide an appeal established under the policy, when such an appeal is requested by the student and parents/guardians.*

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

**Parents** are expected to report an absence to the attendance office on the day of the absence. If a parent fails to call on the day of the absence, **two days will be allowed to excuse or explain the unexcused absence before the absence is permanently recorded as unexcused.** Parents are encouraged to utilize the parent portal for monitoring student attendance.

**Students** are expected to obtain make-up work from teachers on the first day they return to the class and to complete the work within the agreed-upon timelines. Students will be allowed a maximum of two days from the day they are notified to clear any questionable unexcused absences.

**The School** will **make every effort** to notify parents by phone, e-mail, or mail when their child has had three and five non-school related absences during the trimester. **But, failure to do so will not ensure that the student will receive credit** when a student has accumulated nine or more non-school related absences in a trimester. Credit for that class will not be

earned unless a parental appeal is successful.

## **ABSENCE DEFINITIONS**

Absences are either excused or unexcused; however, absences happen for a variety of reasons. To determine the reason for the absence and to ensure consistency in interpreting the policy, a high school administrator will be responsible for identifying what type of absence has occurred.

### **Excused Absences**

An excused absence occurs when parents have notified the school within two days of the absence. Examples include sickness, funerals, court appointments, medical appointments, family emergencies, and vacations. It is the opinion of the school district that absences for **college visits**, family vacations, hunting, etc., should be planned to coincide with scheduled school vacation time. However, if this is not possible, the absence must be prearranged by contacting the appropriate administrative secretary. **These types of absences will count toward the eight allowed absences per class each trimester.**

### **Excused Absences Exempt from the Minimum Class Attendance Requirement**

1. **School-related absence:** Students miss a class and are out of the building because of school-generated activities (sports events, field trips, etc.).
2. **Suspension:** A student has been denied attendance by the administration for disciplinary reasons.

In all types of excused absences, students are allowed to make up the missed work, but it is their responsibility to obtain the assignments from teachers and to complete the work in a timely manner. Generally, one make-up day will be allowed for each day of absence unless the teacher and the student make other arrangements.

### **Unexcused Absences**

**For unexcused absences, students will be allowed to make up work for 60% of the total credit. The following are examples of unexcused absences:**

1. Not having a parent or guardian notify the school within two school days of the absence
2. Missing a class or leaving school during the school day for any reason without first receiving permission from the office
3. Missing class as a result of using transportation other than a school bus
4. Oversleeping, missing the bus, etc.
5. Arriving to class more than 10 minutes late without an acceptable excuse
6. Skipping a class (A student intentionally chooses not to attend the class.)

7. Accumulating 2, 4, 6, 8, etc. tardies in a given class during the course of a trimester

All of these types of absences will count toward the eight allowed absences per class each trimester. Upon accumulation of the ninth unexcused absence in a class, the student will not earn credit for the class. When credit is not earned due to insufficient attendance to earn credit, that fact may be recorded on the student's transcript at the request of the student or parent. The school will make every reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian when the student is unexcused; however, failure to notify the parent/guardian does not excuse the student.

### TARDY POLICY

It is the expectation of the school that instruction begin promptly after the bell rings. Because arriving late to class is disruptive to the instructional process, students are expected to be in class on time. Tardiness occurs when a student enters the classroom after the bell has rung. Unexcused absences will be issued at the accumulation of 2, 4, 6, 8, etc. tardies in a class during the course of a trimester. A teacher will record an unexcused absence (Late) for any student who arrives more than 10 minutes late to class. Students will not be allowed to make up work missed due to tardiness. Unexcused absences due to tardiness will be counted toward a student's eight allowable absences in a class.

### SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

Because seminar meets only twice per week, a total of **eight absences per year** will be allowed in seminar. Students may earn credit in seminar if they meet all established seminar criteria for success. There are three criteria for Seminar credit:

1. A student may not have more than 8 absences in Seminar for the school year.
  - If a student has 9 Seminar absences in a school year with a minimum of one excused absence, they will have an opportunity to serve one hour of Academic Recovery Session.
  - If a student has 10 Seminar absences in a school year with a minimum of two excused absences, they will have the opportunity to serve two hours of Academic Recovery Session.
  - If a student has over 10 absences in a school year, he or she will not earn credit in Seminar.
2. In addition to the maximum of 8 absences in Seminar, **all eight of the absences must be excused**. Students will be given the opportunity to clear any unexcused absences if they have met the first criterion and serve 1 hour of an Academic Recovery Session for each unexcused absence up to eight per year.
3. In addition to attendance requirements, students must also satisfy all other established academic criteria for seminar, **including completion of the state required EDP and use of time for academic purposes**.

Students earn one-half credit in seminar per year since seminar meets twice

per week. No partial credit will be issued.

### **ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Students who become ill during the school day must report to their base building office. School personnel will contact a parent or guardian to obtain permission for students to leave. A staff member may also allow a student to remain in the office for a short time. If a student is ill and chooses to leave school or miss a class without reporting to the office, he/she will receive an unexcused absence.

### **ATTENDANCE APPEAL FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

The building principal or assistant principal will be responsible for interpreting and administering policies that pertain to student attendance and tardiness to class.

To fulfill attendance requirements and to qualify for credit in a class, a student must have no more than eight absences in each class during each trimester. The eight allowed absences per trimester are deemed sufficient to cover routine illnesses in normal circumstances. Exceptions for students who exceed the attendance requirement will be considered if:

- The parent/guardian completes the Appeal Form by the pre-established deadline for the trimester and provides all required documentation as stated on the form.
- The committee approves the parental appeal.

The Attendance Appeal Committee will consist of counselors and administrators and will meet at the end of each trimester to consider all attendance appeals.

### **CREDIT RECOVERY**

Students who exceed eight absences in a trimester will have the opportunity to earn credit in the course through the following means:

1. File and be granted an attendance appeal as described above.
2. If the student does not file an appeal or if a requested appeal is not granted, the student may earn credit via the following:
  - if a student earns  $\geq 77\%$ , or a grade equivalent of a C+ or higher on the department test out criteria; which may include the final exam, essays, projects, assessments, etc., they will earn credit in the course and their final grade will be calculated within the following parameters:
    - if the student is passing, their final grade will be calculated using the normal department procedures.
    - if the student is below passing, they will receive the lowest possible passing grade issued by that department for their final grade.
  - If the student receives  $\leq 76\%$  or grade equivalent below a C+ or higher on the department test out criteria, they will receive an F (failing) or an N (no credit) in accordance with the current guidelines. ("F" if the student was failing the class, "N" if the

student would have passed the class without having exceeded the attendance requirements.)





*Alma Mater Hymn*

*West Ottawa we'll cherish, Alma Mater hail.  
Salute Panther vict'ry always, we will never fail.  
Knowledge we will have forever, honor, wisdom's light  
And ever will we praise thee, noble Black and White.*

*Langejans and Seidelman-Porter*