

THE WILLITS CHARTER SCHOOL
FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK
2017-2018



Willits Charter School

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WCS Mission & Vision

Mission

The mission of Willits Charter School is to enable students in grades 6-12 to reach their fullest potential by providing them with a high-quality, personalized education in a safe and supportive environment. We strive to inspire students to embrace their curious, creative nature and be self-motivated, competent, life-long learners. We encourage students to become productive citizens who respect themselves, others, community, diversity, and the environment.

Vision

Willits Charter School maintains high academic standards while respecting the unique qualities of all learners. Our commitment to teaching individual responsibility as well as compassion and respect for self and others motivates all of our educational policies and procedures. We encourage students to reach for new heights in learning and to embrace challenges as opportunities, seeking their own positive solutions and find personal fulfillment as a result of their efforts.

Our faculty, staff and board embody the school's mission and vision providing both expertise and passion in their fields. We incorporate the arts, humanities, sciences and physical education throughout our curriculum at all levels. We are firmly committed to literacy and we encourage critical thinking in every subject.

Willits Charter School is a place where families are actively involved in the formal education of their children. We recognize that every stakeholder plays an important role in a student's academic success as well as personal development, and we work cooperatively with families to ensure that success.

Program Overview

WCS is an intentionally small, independent charter school serving grades 6 through 12. Like all charter schools, we are open to all who wish to attend, we do not charge tuition, teach religious doctrine, or discriminate in admissions policies. Our curriculum aligns with the standards adopted by the state of California (including Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards) and students participate in annual standardized tests (CAASPP and the California Physical Fitness Test). Our original charter was granted in 1998 by Willits Unified School District and was unanimously renewed for 5 years in 2002, 2007, 2012, and again in 2017. WCS functions as its own school district and is not a part of the Willits Unified School District. Willits Charter School is a *Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)* fully accredited Middle and High School.

Governance

The Charter School Association of Willits Board of Directors determines the general policies of the school, conducts long term strategic planning, ensures that the school achieves its educational and financial goals, and governs WCS. The Board is composed of 5-11 members representing both parents and the community at large.

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors occur on the first Tuesday of each month, at 4:00 p.m. during the school year (summer meeting times are subject to change) to discuss policy and procedural matters relevant to the school. These meetings are open to the public and the agenda is posted in front of the school at least 72 hours in advance. Parents may submit agenda items for discussion to the director of the school or any board member. The director implements the policies of the Board and oversees the day-to-day operations of the school.

Charter School Association of Willits Board of Directors

Eric Glassey (President)
Aura de la Fuente (Vice President)
Kay Moen (Treasurer)
Sally Rulison (Secretary)
Jackie Lopez (Member)
Stella Bonnet (Member)
Sequoia Beebe (Member)
Bob Cronin (Member)
Annie Rueb (Member)

Family Involvement

Our school was founded on the principle of family involvement, which benefits both the school and our students. By giving time and effort to the school, parents/guardians show that they value education, which encourages students to value it as well. Parent presence also helps many students feel more comfortable at school and gives families a chance to be active in their children's academic life.

Willits Charter School seeks to make education a community passion. We believe that parent participation is essential to the success of the education process. The Charter's mission is to develop students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults. This mission cannot be accomplished without the active and ongoing support of the entire charter community.

WCS parents/guardians agree to be active participants in the school community and to attend school functions such as parent-teacher conferences, student study team meetings, portfolio conferences, back to school night, and special celebrations. We depend upon the help of parents/guardians in

practical ways: as class parents, groundskeepers, repair persons, classroom aides, tutors, event organizers, fundraising support, drivers for field trips, maintenance etc.

WCS offers a range of opportunities to volunteer at the school. Volunteer hours can be spent on activities involving the students, educators, or the school site. The following are a few of the many ways families can be involved:

Education - Volunteers coordinate with the educators directly.

- In-class support as an educator aide
- Outside research in support of specific school projects
- Substitute teaching for elective or Friday Academy classes
- Driving/chaperoning on field trips
- Coaching an after-school sport
- Organizing or supporting a community service project for students

Administrative support - Volunteers coordinate with the Administrative staff.

- Supervision at the Charter School – brunch/lunch periods, front desk, library, parking lot
- Operation support

Committees/Teams - Volunteers coordinate with the Administration.

- Committee/Team involvement
- Attending monthly Parent Association meetings

Maintenance - Volunteers coordinate with the Administrative staff.

- Maintenance of the Charter School site

We recommend that parents volunteer the following number of hours annually:

- **One child - 40 hours**
- **Each additional student - 20 hours per student**
- **Independent study student – 20 hours per student**

Volunteering for a specific duty or task requires total dependability. Educators & other parents must be able to plan & schedule events or courses based on reliable volunteers.

School Staff

Administration

Jennifer Lockwood, Director
Jason Erlick, Business Manager
Carina Lopez, SIS/State Reporting/Registrar

Faculty and Staff

Jillian Anderson-Rano - Conversational Spanish, CP Spanish I-III, Math Support
Becky Button - 6th - 8th grade Independent Study
Michel Chenelle - 8th grade Social Studies, 8th - 12th Grade Language Arts
Laura Corben - CP Art
Kate Craig - 9th - 12th grade Independent Study, AP US History, CP World History, Geography
Wendy Copperfield - Library Coordinator, Office Assistant
Billy Hetherington - CP Performing Arts, Middle School Drama, Radio, Student Leadership, and School Counselor
Scot Lamon - Special Education teacher
Lee Ann Maidrand - Culinary Arts Assistant
Erin Mendoza - Choir Instructor
Lisa Shore - Physical Education Instructor
Jordan Uggla - Technology Coordinator
Melissa Miles - 6th & 7th Grade Language Arts and Social Studies, Journalism
Gaea Reid - 6th & 7th Grade Science and Math, 8th Grade Science
Sienna Reno - Middle School Art & Ceramics instructor
Erin Vaccaro - Academic Counselor, CP/H Biology, CP Chemistry, and AP Environmental Science
Darian Yanez & Tyler Balthrop - Music teachers
Gwyn Ware - Gardening teacher
Charlie Widner - Culinary Arts instructor
Chris Wood - 8th Grade Math, CP Algebra I, Common Core Algebra II, and CP Calculus

Student Attendance

Attendance

WCS parents/guardians agree to support the school by ensuring that their children are in school every day unless they are sick or have an unavoidable emergency. This is the single most important thing you can do to support your child academically and the school financially.

Parents and students need to understand the importance of attendance, starting in the early grades and continuing through high school. Good attendance will help your children do well in high school, college and at work. Students can suffer academically if they miss 10 percent of school

days or about 18 days; it doesn't matter if these absences are excused or unexcused. They all represent lost time in the classroom and a lost opportunity to learn. By middle and high school, chronic absence is a leading warning sign that a student will drop out. Please show your child that attendance matters to you and that you won't allow an absence unless someone is truly sick.

School begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m. Monday -Thursday, and 2:10 on Friday. After school tutorial occurs Monday-Thursday, from 3:48-4:30 p.m. All students not attending tutorial must be picked up by 3:50 p.m.. All students that remain on campus after 3:50 p.m. must attend tutorial.

Students that are not in regular attendance at Willits Charter School may be disenrolled from the school. Numerous attempts will be made to contact the family via phone and mail prior to disenrolling a student from the school. Our fiscal survival is dependent upon good attendance.

Absence

WCS students need to attend school and every class every day unless they are sick or there is an unavoidable emergency. **In the event of illness or an unavoidable emergency, parents must notify WCS before 9:00 a.m. for the absence to be considered excused.** You may leave a message on the answering machine if it is before school hours.

Valid reasons for absence from school (Excused Absences)

1. *Illness:* A signed medical excuse is required if a student accumulates three days of illness within the school month.
2. *Medical or dental appointments:* Parents should try to schedule appointments during non-school hours. Doctor verification may be required if appointments interfere with school success.
3. *Family emergencies and Justifiable personal reasons (including participation in religious instruction or exercises).*

Truancy (Unexcused Absences)

Truancy is defined as:

1. Being absent from school without valid excuse for more than three days over the course of one school year

-or-

2. Being tardy in excess of 30 minutes on more than three days over the course of one school year.

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. When a student is truant, a student attendance review meeting will be called to address attendance issues. Parents, teachers, and the Director will discuss possible interventions and create an attendance agreement. Families who fail to comply with the attendance agreement drafted at this meeting may be referred to the District Attorney's office for truancy (Ed. Code 48320, 48321, and 48323).

WCS does not receive any funding for a student on any day that s/he does not come to school; however, we do receive funding if a student comes to school for even a portion of the day. Please keep this in mind when you are scheduling medical appointments and arrange for your child to attend at least part of the school day. **Absences of 3 or more consecutive days need a doctor's note to return to school.**

Leaving School Early

In the case of illness or a family emergency, a high school student with his/her own transportation may be released with parent/guardian permission. Middle school students, however, will only be released to a parent/guardian or to the care of an adult whose name appears on the child's emergency card on file in the school office.

Missed Work Due to Excused Absences

It is the responsibility of the student to take care of missed work when s/he returns to school. For absences of 2 or more days due to illness, homework can be provided, or Short Term Independent Study can be arranged (see below). Although each teacher has their own late-work policy, in general, homework is only accepted after the due date if it is missed due to illness/absence. The "grace period" in which the student can receive full credit for a 1 day absence =1 day to make up for full credit, 2 day absence=2 days to make up for full credit.

Short Term Independent Study (MIS)

If it is known **ahead of time** that a student will be absent from school, parents should request a program of Short Term Independent Study **at least one week in advance of the absence**. This enables the student to receive assignments for the period s/he will be gone and to receive credit for the work. It also enables the school to receive funding for the days the student is absent. This work is **due the day the student returns to school**. Attendance is determined by work completed. Students who do not return MIS assignments are not guaranteed the opportunity to participate in MIS in the future.

Daily Schedule

8:00 School opens

8:30 School starts

12:14-12:51 Lunch (12:23-12:57 Fridays)

3:45 School Ends (2:10 Fridays)

3:48-4:30 Tutorial/Block 7 (Monday-Thursday)

4:30 School Closes

General Information

No bikes, skateboards, rollerblades, roller skate shoes, or scooters may be ridden on school property at any time. There are bike racks in the back yard for students who ride bikes or scooters to school. Rollerblades, roller skates, or roller skate shoes should be left at home. Students who use skateboards or scooters for transportation may store these items in student lockers. Skateboards may be stored on the skateboard rack in the *Big Room* during the day; however, these are *never* to be used within the vicinity of the school. This includes the back yard, the parking lots around the school, the sidewalks in front of the school and the street. This is for student safety as there are many vehicles that enter and exit the school parking lot.

Contact Numbers

It is extremely important for us to be able to reach you in case of emergency or if we have a question about your child! Please be sure that we have correct contact numbers and emergency information, including home phone, work phone(s), cell phone, mailing address, email, names and numbers of emergency contacts, etc. **Please notify us immediately if any of these numbers should change.**

Electronics Policy

Willits Charter School does **not** allow the use of cell phones or other electronics outside of the classroom. This includes any devices to make phone calls, listen to music, peruse the internet, take pictures, play games, text, explore social media, watch videos, etc. All devices must be either turned off or placed in silent mode. Personal devices may only be used **in the classroom as an educational tool under the supervision of a teacher.**

- Earbuds/headphones must be put away and not be visible during the school day.
- If a student uses a personal electronic device on campus, the device will be taken by a staff member and turned in to the office. We will return the device to the student at the end of the day the first two times the phone is taken by a staff member. The third time the device is confiscated by a staff member (and any time after that) the device may only be picked up by a parent or guardian – it will not be given back to the student at the end of the day.
- Students will be able to use the phone in the office if they need to make an emergency call, but only in the morning, during brunch or lunch, or after school. Students may not use the phone during class time, except in the case of illness. In the case of illness, the office staff will call an approved family member.

- Before or after school, students may use their phones outside in front of the school to call their families. Please wait until you are outside of the front door before you take your phone or other electronic device out.
- 11th & 12th Graders will be designated a classroom where they may listen to music or use their phones/electronics devices during brunch and lunch. **This is for upper grade students only.**
- Parents, please be assured that if you need to contact your student, the office staff is available and willing to get a message to your student. Please leave only messages that are crucial for the student to have before the end of school. ***Please support this policy by not calling or texting your student during school hours.***

Computers

Students must adhere to the Willits Charter School's Acceptable Use Policy for Computers. Please refer to the policy for details. Computers are to be used for school purposes only: research, word processing and/or other software use for class projects, etc. All students will be given a willitscharter.net Google account for school use only. Misuses or abuse of computer privileges may result in disciplinary action that could include loss of computer privileges, or on campus or home suspension. Student's Google accounts will be disabled upon disenrolling or graduating from the school.

11th/12th graders will have the option of checking out a Chromebook for home use. Students/parents must sign an agreement and will be liable for the Chromebook if it is lost or destroyed.

Enrollment

Admission to WCS is open to any resident of the state of California. We do not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability. We do not charge tuition or conduct sectarian programs, admissions policies or employment practices. We hold a series of open enrollment periods every spring and summer for the following school year.

The process is as follows:

- The Charter Board of Directors sets limits on each grade level for the following year;
- Students and parents in the community are informed of enrollment periods;
- Information about enrollment is given in the local newspaper, school bulletins and marquee;
- The number of returning students is determined;
- The number of openings per class is determined;
- Priority is given to returning current students, current students siblings, and children of staff and board members;
- Remaining openings will be filled from the applicant list. If there are more applicants than openings, all applicants' names will be entered into a random lottery, conducted with impartial observers.

- Lottery picks will be numbered and spaces filled according to lottery number. The waiting list will follow from lottery placement numbers.

Details on the lottery and placement system may be found in the WCS Charter.

Field Trips

Any student going on a school-sponsored field trip must have a permission slip signed by the parent/guardian. A student may be excluded from participating in a field trip if, based on behavior concerns or academic performance, the teacher or administrators feel the student's behavior may interfere with the ability of others to have a safe, enjoyable, educational experience.

Volunteer drivers transporting students for field trips should be aware that their personal insurance is the primary coverage. We require that drivers submit copies of their insurance coverage amounts to confirm that there is the necessary coverage. In addition, drivers may only carry the number of passengers for which their vehicle was designed and must have functioning seat belts. Before the trip, drivers will be asked to fill out an owner/driver information form and submit proof of insurance. Proof of insurance and a copy of the driver's license must be updated annually. Field trip transportation rules will be distributed and reviewed prior to leaving for the trip.

Food Service

WCS provides lunch at midday and brunch after Block 1. Brunch/breakfast is the most important meal of the day and we encourage all families to have their students enjoy our brunches. Lunch costs \$3.00 and brunch costs \$1.50. Reduced price breakfast is \$0.30 and reduced price lunch is \$0.40. We participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. We offer both free or reduced price lunch and brunch to students whose families qualify for the federal lunch program. Yearly forms are required to verify qualification for this program. We wish to keep charges for brunch and lunch to emergencies only. Please send money with your child to purchase meals. We encourage parents to pre-purchase meals for their child's use. Any outstanding balances will be billed home at the end of the month. If outstanding balances are not paid by the end of the school year, families will not receive the student's report card or transcript.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your

completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Immunizations

Effective January 1, 2016, new California law SB 277 states that exemptions based on personal beliefs will no longer be an option for the vaccines that are currently required for entry into child care or school in California. Most families will not be affected by the new law because their children have received all required vaccinations. Properly completed personal beliefs exemptions on file for a child already attending child care or school in California will remain valid until the child reaches the next immunization checkpoint at kindergarten (including transitional kindergarten) or 7th grade. Personal belief exemptions filed from another state or country are not valid if student is transferring to a California school after January 1, 2016. Properly completed medical exemptions for immunizations will be allowed for students when they have been issued by a licensed physician.

For more information about SB 277, see the Frequently Asked Questions available at: <http://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/sb277faq/>.

For more information about school immunization requirements and resources, visit the California Department of Public Health's website at www.shotsforschool.org, or contact your local health department or county office of education.

In addition, independent study students **that attend any onsite classes** will be required to have immunizations for entry.

Students who have an individualized education program (IEP) should continue to receive all necessary services identified in their IEP regardless of their vaccination status.

Medical and personal beliefs exemptions will be allowed from any new immunization requirement initiated by CDPH for attendance at school or child care.

Students Admitted at Ages 7-17 Years Need These Immunizations:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, DT, Tdap, or Td)—4 doses (3 doses OK if last dose was given on or after 2nd birthday)
- Polio (OPV or IPV)—4 doses (3 doses OK if one was given on or after 2nd birthday)
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)—1 dose (2 doses required at 7th grade)
- Varicella (chickenpox) (Admission at ages 7-12 years need 1 dose; ages 13-17 years need 2 doses)

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap) —1 dose at 7th grade or out-of-state transfer admission at 8th–12th grades (1 dose on or after the 7th birthday)

Lockers

Lockers are available for 6th – 12th grade students and will be assigned during the first week of school. Students must provide their own locks. Please keep valuables under lock and key—**we are not responsible for the loss of personal belongings**. Locker privileges will be rescinded for students who leave food in their locker. Please, no stickers or writing on lockers.

Medical Screening

During the course of the school year we will conduct hearing/vision testing for 8th and 10th graders.

Medications

All prescription and other non-prescription medications, including inhalers, are to be stored in the front office and administered by school staff. Students may only be able to carry an inhaler on their person if we have a doctor's note stating that it is safe to do so. Medications must be in their original containers with the student's name clearly written on the container and must be accompanied by written instructions from the doctor detailing use of the medication. We will not dispense over-the-counter pain relievers (aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen) without the expressed permission of the parent/guardian. Students may not be in possession of any medications while on school campus.

Messages and Phone Use

If necessary, the WCS office can deliver messages to students; however, we request that these be reserved for **emergencies**. Students may use the office phone for brief calls before 8:25 a.m., during brunch and lunch; and after 3:40 p.m. Please communicate **non-emergency** information or family plans before your child arrives to school. The office will call home in the event of any illness or emergency.

Open Campus Policy

Our campus is open at lunchtime for high school students only. Off campus privileges may be taken away due to excessive tardies and/or absences. Excessive tardies constitutes three or more unexcused tardies. Detention will be given for three unexcused tardies, and for every unexcused tardy after that. It is a closed campus at all other times of the school day for all students. High school students are not allowed to leave school without parent permission at any time other than lunch. Campus property does not include the coffee booth next door.

End of Day Pick Up

Please solidify your plans for picking up your child prior to dropping off your student in the morning. Students will not be permitted to use the phone during the day to plan dates with friends or to make evening plans. Phones are to be used for emergencies only.

Outside Food

High school students that are permitted to go off campus for lunch are not allowed to bring food back onto campus. All food and drink must be consumed prior to returning to school. If a parent is taking a student off campus for lunch the same rule applies - all food must be consumed prior to returning to school. If you plan on bringing food to your child on campus, please make sure that all food deliveries occur during the lunch period. Students may not leave class to eat lunch or take an extended lunch period to eat food that was brought to them.

Lunch Detention

Lunch Detention will be assigned to any student that has received 3 or more unexcused tardies in the morning (**including** Advisory - now called Wellness, Community, & Service, or WCS) or at any time during the school day. Students will be assigned one lunch detention for the first three unexcused tardies. This process will begin again after the lunch detention has been served, and a parent meeting will be scheduled. Lunch detention for tardies will be assigned at predetermined dates. Lunch detention may also be assigned for violations of school or classroom rules. This starts over every Quarter, so the student may start fresh again after every Quarter.

Dress Code

Willits Charter School's dress code supports equitable educational access and does not reinforce gender stereotypes. Willits Charter School's dress code and administrative enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, household income, gender identity or cultural observance. The responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and his or her parents or guardians. Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring student compliance with the school dress code.

Our values are:

- All students should be able to dress comfortably for school without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline or body shaming.
- All students and staff should understand that they are responsible for managing their own personal "distractions" without regulating individual students' clothing/self-expression.
- Teachers should be able to focus on teaching without the additional and often uncomfortable burden of dress code enforcement.
- Students should not face unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- Reasons for conflict and inconsistent discipline should be minimized whenever possible.

GOALS OF WILLITS CHARTER SCHOOL'S STUDENT DRESS CODE

The intention of our student dress code is to accomplish several goals:

- Maintain a safe learning environment in classes where protective or supportive clothing is needed, such as Chemistry/Biology, Culinary Arts, etc. or PE (athletic attire/shoes).

- Allow students to wear clothing of their choice that is comfortable.
- Allow students to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, or explicit images.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing with images or language depicting or advocating violence or the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of gender/gender identification, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, body type/size, religion, and personal style.

WCS'S DRESS CODE POLICY

The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and parents or guardians. Willits Charter School is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student. Students should be given the most choice possible in how they dress for school. Any restrictions must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and are explained within the dress code.

1. Basic Principle:

- Private body parts must be covered with opaque material for all students.

2. Students Must Wear:*

- Shirt
- Bottom: pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings
- Shoes; activity-specific shoes requirements will be required (for example, for P.E. or Culinary Arts)

*Courses or activities that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, Portfolio Conferences, public speaking, field trips, internships, P.E., Culinary Arts, and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress.

3. Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images.
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity) or the use of same.
- Hate speech, profanity, explicit images, images that objectify or sexualize any gender.
- Clothing that may fall off during physical activity or become displaced in a way that breaks above rules.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class. Clothing, including gang identifiers, must not pose a threat to the health or safety of any other student or staff.
- Visible underwear. Visible waistbands or straps on undergarments worn under other clothing are not a violation.
- Bathing suits.
- Helmets or headgear that obscures the face (except as a religious observance). Sunglasses may only be worn inside if they are prescription, or needed for medical reasons (must bring doctor's note).

Dress Code Enforcement:

- Enforcement will be consistent with a school's overall discipline plan.
- Students' parents may be called during the day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- Student will be given the option to turn the shirt inside out (if this will solve the problem), change into clothing the student has with them at school, change into a shirt provided by the school, or have their parent come to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.

Response and Responsibility

WCS parents/guardians agree to respond in a timely way to requests from the school for action or information. Please respond quickly when asked for assistance and return permission slips and questionnaires promptly.

Special Education Services

WCS contracts with the Willits Unified School District for the provision of special education services for students with identified learning disabilities or other special needs; thus it may be necessary for WCS students to go to Baechtel Grove Middle School or other District campuses to receive services from district special education staff.

Textbooks, Library Books, and School Supplies

Students are responsible for the textbooks issued to them and/or library books they check out and will be charged for misuse or loss of books. When books are issued, students will sign for them, noting current condition, so they will not be charged for prior damage. WCS will withhold report cards and/or transcripts until textbooks are returned, replaced, or a fee is paid to cover the cost of

the missing book.

We request that students bring the following items to school at the beginning of the year:

- Three-ring binder
- Lined paper
- Pencils &/or pens
- Protractor/ Compass
- Ruler
- Calculator (scientific if necessary for class)

A teacher for an individual class may specify other supplies in the syllabus on the first day of school. For sixth grade, families will be given a supply list at Orientation.

Transportation

WCS students are allowed to use the Willits Unified School District buses for transportation to and/or from school. Contact the WUSD bus barn for route information: 459-1783 x1595. Buses will not make special stops for WCS students. Students must walk from Baechtel Grove Middle School. **Please note that WCS' early day is Friday instead of Tuesday, so the bus schedule does not coincide with our schedule on those two days.*

Visitors

Students from other schools who are contemplating enrollment may arrange to spend a day at WCS. Parents should contact the office in advance to arrange for "shadowing." Otherwise, students from other schools are not allowed on campus unless they are on school business. All visitors must sign in and out at the school office.

Withdrawals

A parent/guardian must initiate the withdrawal process. Textbooks must be returned and any charges for lost or damaged books and lunch or brunch charges must be paid before transcripts and other student records will be forwarded to the new school.

Evacuation

In case of evacuation due to an emergency, the school's evacuation spot is the Willits Harrah Senior Center located at 1501 Baechtel Road, Willits. If the school must be evacuated, the faculty and staff will walk the students in an orderly fashion to the Senior Center where parents will be contacted to pick students up. Faculty members will stay with students until the last student is picked up.

Academic Program

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to avoid any type of dishonesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, or aiding in dishonesty. Plagiarism is defined as “representing the work of another as one’s own (including text found on the internet) without the necessary and appropriate acknowledgement.” A Student Reference Guide is provided at the beginning of the year that includes academic expectations with explanations and examples for citing references. This reference guide is also available on the WCS website.

When an instructor is confronted with evidence of academic dishonesty, s/he will take appropriate action, which may include re-assignment of the paper or exam, assigning a failing grade, requiring a parent conference, or, in repeated instances, removal from the class and a note to the student’s permanent record. If a student knowingly hands over their work for copying, they may receive a failing grade as well.

College Classes and Counseling

High school students may elect to take classes through Mendocino College and earn extra credit, thus accelerating the route to graduation. Each 200 level college course credit earns 3.3 units of high school credit. (Example: 3 units at MCC earns 10 WCS credits.) Courses with less than 200 level work receive double credit. High school counseling and advisement on graduation and college entrance requirements are available from Erin Vaccaro, our College/Career counselor, or Jennifer Lockwood, school director.

College Prep Curriculum

WCS offers all high school students the opportunity to complete the a-g requirements. The a-g / College Entrance Requirements are a sequence of high school courses that students must complete (with a grade of C or better) to be minimally eligible for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU).

The following WCS high school classes have been approved by the University of California for “a-g College-Prep” status. Not all classes are offered each year. Students and parents can view the current year’s approved course list online at:

<https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist#/list/search/all>.

“a” History:

CP US History
CP World History
Honors World History
Honors US History
AP US History

“b” English:	CP English 9, 10, 11, 12 Honors English 11, 12
“c” Math:	CP Algebra I CP Common Core Algebra II CP Geometry CP Calculus AP Statistics CP Trigonometry/Advanced Math Topics
“d” Lab Science:	CP Biology Honors Biology AP Biology AP Environmental Science
“e” Foreign Language	CP Chemistry CP Spanish I CP Spanish II CP Spanish III
“f” Visual & Performing Arts:	CP Painting and Drawing CP Ceramics and Sculpture CP Theatre Arts CP Music
“g” C.P. Elective:	CP Civics CP Economics CP Environmental Science Honors Environmental Science CP Physical Science of Everyday Life CP Art History

Transferability

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges has validated the integrity of our program and transcripts, and all of our core courses are CSU and UC approved. All course credits are transferable to other California public high schools.

Upon transferring from another high school to WCS, our Counselor will evaluate your transcripts and transfer your credits onto our WCS transcripts and toward your WCS diploma. If we have any questions we will contact your previous school directly.

Community Service

We view community service as an integral part of our curriculum and require all students to participate in a minimum of 20 hours of service to the community per year, 5 hours per quarter in order to receive passing grade. Students may earn up to 10 hours of service in the summertime. There are many ways this service can be accomplished and WCS staff will work with students to help them find ways to complete this requirement. Community service grades of pass/fail will be reported on student’s report cards and transcripts. No credit is awarded for community service.

Grades and Honor Roll

WCS teachers assign grades four times per year, at the end of each quarter. 1st and 3rd Quarter Grades are labeled as “Progress Reports” and Semester (final) grades are given twice per year (see school calendar). Teachers assess student performance by evaluating a variety of assignments, including classwork, homework, tests, quizzes, papers, projects, and class participation. Please note that Willits Charter School does not accept anything lower than a “C” to pass the class. Awards will be given for Honor Roll students during awards ceremonies held four times per year. For middle school, students on Honor Roll must have earned grades of B or better in all classes **and** completed the community service requirement. For high school, students on Honor Roll must have earned 3.0 or higher in all classes **and** completed the community service requirement.

What is mastery-based grading?

Mastery-based grading measures how well your student understands material and can perform essential skills in a class. At the beginning of every unit, the teacher will break down the standards for the unit into smaller objectives and criteria using a detailed rubric. During the unit, student understanding of the material is measured through a variety of means, such as traditional pencil-and-paper tests, online assessments, projects, discussions, or reports. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of the essential standards. The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, student, and parent with an accurate picture of the student’s learning and to encourage a dialogue about how the student can master the standards for the class.

How is the WCS grading system different from traditional grading?

In the traditional 100-point grading system, a student’s grades are typically based on all of the work assigned in class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book based on the type of assignment rather than on the essential standards for the class. Mastery-based grading does not separate out tests, homework, or projects. All of the work a student does is used to assess the student’s understanding of the essential standards.

Student learning is translated into a traditional grading scale using A, B, C, F. Willits Charter School does not offer D’s in our grading system. As our high school program is a college preparatory program, it is important that all students pass classes with a C or higher. If a student is not exhibiting a satisfactory level of achievement towards the standards, they will not pass the course. The letter grades assigned based on student mastery of standards are aligned with the expectations of colleges and universities.

To continue to prepare students for college and careers, student grades will also incorporate a system called “TOES,” or Time Management, Organization, Engagement, and Study Skills (see TOES scale below). Factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance are included in this system, which will comprise 10% of the grade in each core class.

Willits Charter School's Grading Scale

<p>A = Advanced</p> <p>The student understands all concepts and demonstrates essential skills. The student can creatively and independently apply concepts and skills to novel situations.</p>	<p>P=Proficient</p> <p>The student understands all concepts and demonstrates essential skills. The student can apply concepts and skills to novel situations with little to no guidance.</p>	<p>S = Satisfactory</p> <p>The student understands all concepts and demonstrates essential skills. With guidance, the student can apply concepts and skills to novel situations.</p>	<p>N = Not mastered/Not evident</p> <p>Student understanding of concepts and demonstration of skills is not yet satisfactory.</p>
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<p>A (95)</p> <p>Student work demonstrates at least a proficient level of achievement for all features. Most features demonstrate an advanced level of achievement.</p>	<p>B (85)</p> <p>Student work demonstrates at least a satisfactory level of achievement for all features. Most features demonstrate a proficient or advanced level of achievement.</p>	<p>C (75)</p> <p>Student work demonstrates at least a satisfactory level of achievement for all factors.</p>	<p>F (50)</p> <p>Student work does not demonstrate a satisfactory level of achievement for most features.</p>
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Graduation Requirements

WCS graduation requirements are outlined below. For reference, one semester of a course is generally worth 5 credits. Please note that the WCS graduation requirements are fully aligned with the College Entrance/a-g requirements, effective for the Class of 2019 and beyond.

Content Areas	Graduating Class of 2018	Graduating Classes of 2019 and 2020	Graduating Class of 2021
English	40 credits	40 credits	40 credits
Math (including Algebra I)	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits
History	World History 10 credits U.S. History 10 credits Civics 5 credits Economics 5 credits Geography 5 credits	World History 10 credits U.S. History 10 credits Civics 5 credits Economics 5 credits	World History 10 credits U.S. History 10 credits Civics 5 credits Economics 5 credits Geography 5 credits
Science	Biological Sciences 10 credits Physical Sciences 10 credits Additional Science 10 credits Health 5 credits	Biological Sciences 10 credits Physical Sciences 10 credits Additional Science 10 credits	Biological Sciences 10 credits Physical Sciences 10 credits Additional Science 10 credits
Visual & Performing Arts	10 credits	10 credits	10 credits
Physical Education	20 credits	20 credits	20 credits
Foreign Language	10 credits	20 credits	20 credits
Electives	60 credits	50 credits	45 credits
Internships	5 credits	5 credits	5 credits
Senior Project	5 credits	5 credits	5 credits
Total Credits	250 credits	240 credits	240 credits

Homework and Extra Credit

Teachers at WCS assign homework that reinforces learning and helps students develop their skills. Time spent on homework will vary according to the student's grade level, ability and the difficulty of the assignments. An approximate average time to expect is one or two hours of homework, four or five times per week.

A student who is current with homework and assignments may request extra credit work from teachers.

Independent Study Program

Our Independent Study Program is an alternative instructional program designed to individualize an educational plan for students outside the regular classroom. To be admitted to the program, parents/students must submit a request to the director and personally meet with the director and independent study coordinator to review the request. Enrollment in Independent Study is limited to a small number of self-motivated students who show evidence that they can work independently to complete the program. Students must have no grades below a "C" for the semester prior to enrolling in Independent Study. New students will be placed on "probation" for one semester. Students may be exited from the IS program if they fall below a C average in core subjects, fail to return assignments, or do not meet regularly with their education coordinator. The student is either placed onsite at WCS or may transfer to another school or program.

Internship Program

All juniors will participate in an Internship. Students will earn 5 credits through the Internship Program, which are required for graduation. During one quarter, students will create resumes, cover letters, practice interview skills, and be set up with an internship with a local business/individual. During another quarter, students will work off campus at the site of their internship. Selected quarters may vary from semester to semester based on availability of local placements. Placements, work hours, and schedules are developed on an individual basis to meet the needs of students, families, and businesses. Transportation to internships is the responsibility of the student. For more information on internships, please contact Emily Apodaca please email at eapodaca@willitscharter.net or leave her a message at 459-5506.

Middle School Retention Policy

A middle school student may be retained if s/he receives two or more semester Fs in the eight core class semester grades for the year. The decision for retention is made by conferring with the student's teachers, parents, and the school director.

Parent-Teacher Conferences/Student Led Portfolio Conferences

We conduct parent-teacher conferences as needed to support academic achievement and address behavior issues. Parents or teachers may also request a conference at any time. At least one parent/guardian is required to attend. Student Led Portfolio Conferences will be conducted at the end of the school year where students will lead a conference with their parent(s) to show their growth throughout the year.

Physical Education

Middle school students will be required to take at least one semester of PE per year, although it may be done off campus and verified with a parent/guardian signature. Students will be automatically placed in a P.E. class for one semester to cover this requirement. High school students must complete 20 units of PE in order to graduate. Some, or all, of the PE requirement may be met by engaging in and documenting up to 5 units of off-campus physical activities per quarter. Five units are approximately equivalent to 70 hours of activities/exercise. These activities might include running, bicycling, aerobic dance, swimming, skateboarding, or other sports. P.E. logs for high school students are readily available on campus and the WCS website.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards are mailed home at the end of each quarter. In addition, a letter will be mailed home approximately midway through each quarter if a student is earning an **F** in a class. At Willits Charter School, any grade below a C is marked as a failing grade. All students must achieve a C or higher to pass their classes.

Science Fair Projects

All students enrolled in a science class, including Independent Study science classes, are required to complete a science fair project. Due dates and guidelines will be provided by science teachers. Students who do not complete this requirement of their science class cannot earn a passing mark for the second semester of their science class.

Senior Projects

Senior projects give students an opportunity to explore and develop one of their interests while receiving school credit. The Senior Project is the culmination of a year's worth of thought, planning and work and includes developing a concept or idea, writing a research paper, seeing the project through to completion, publicly presenting it at the school or elsewhere, and finally writing a follow-up reflective paper. Projects could include, but are not limited to, art exhibits, musical or dance performances, topical research, drama, travel, inventions, and community service projects. Additional requirements of the senior project include an autobiography, a future plans essay, and a resume. Erin Vaccaro, senior advisor, will coordinate the Senior Project. The senior project earns 5 units of credit required for graduation.

Standardized Testing

WCS administers annual *CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress)* testing to 6th – 8th and 11th graders, the *CAST (California Science Test)* to students in Grade 8 and Grade 10, and the California Physical Fitness Test to 7th and 9th graders. The English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (*ELPAC*) is administered annually to students who are non-native English speakers working towards fluency in English. This ELPAC will not occur until 2018-2019.

Students with IEPs may be eligible to take the *CAASPP* test with built in accommodations or modifications.

Students who are English learners must take the state tests in the language of English. However, students receiving instruction in Spanish, or Spanish-speaking students who have been enrolled in the United States for less than twelve months, may take the state tests in the language of Spanish.

As a publicly funded charter school, we are required to participate in *CAASPP* testing and *CAASPP* scores are the primary measurements used to assess our performance for charter renewals. It is extremely important for all our students to participate in the *CAASPP* program and put forth their best effort. Please ensure that your child is in school during *CAASPP* testing (usually held in May). We are accountable to the state for a high (95%) participation rate.

MAP Testing (Measures of Academic Progress)

Willits Charter School conducts MAP testing three times per year. MAP testing is a personalized assessment experience that adapts to each student's learning level. Teachers obtain assessment data about what each student knows and is ready to learn. We use the assessment data to place students into support or enrichment classes based on the results. We also use this data to report to the district on our school's academic progress.

PSAT

The PSAT is an optional test designed to provide students with valuable feedback about their academic skills. The PSAT is the first step in preparing to take the SAT. The test measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. Students will receive detailed feedback based on their performance as well as suggestions for academic improvement. This test is offered to juniors in the fall and to 8th graders, freshmen, and sophomores in the spring. For more information about the PSAT, please contact Erin Vaccaro at 459-5506.

Student Study Teams

A Student Study Team (SST) meeting may be arranged at any time to discuss special problems a student may be having and to create an action plan to support the student at school and at home. The SST team includes parents/guardians, the student, director and core curriculum teachers.

Sustained Silent Reading

As part of our program to develop students' literacy and reading skills, we observe a 20-minute period of sustained silent reading (SSR) Monday - Thursday before 3rd Block. Students may select their own books. Please support this program by encouraging your child to always take a book with him/her to school. SSR is part of the student's Language Arts grade.

Transcripts

An official transcript of grades and high school credits earned is maintained for all 9th-12th grade students. To request an official transcript, please email transcripts@willitscharter.net or use the request form on the Willits Charter School's website (<https://www.willitscharter.org/transcripts/>). Transcript requests will be processed within three business days.

WCS Behavioral Expectations

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Willits Charter School utilizes a system called MTSS, or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. Willits Charter School also utilizes Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports to teach appropriate behaviors and acknowledge when students are following the rules. We do this through reward systems, tickets, acknowledgement during awards ceremonies, etc. The faculty, staff, and students at Willits Charter School have created the following “Guidelines for Success” to be followed in all areas of the school. The three tenets of positive behavior at WCS fall under the three categories of being Compassionate, Engaged, and Responsible. Please see the “Rules & Expectations, WCS Guidelines for Success” in the back of this packet.

The Students of Willits Charter School agree:

- To **support and respect the learning environment** so teachers can teach and students can learn.
- To do **nothing that causes harm** to self, others or the school.
- To be in **class ready to learn**, when class begins and for the duration of the class. This means students must have paper, pencil, pen and books with them when the bell rings.
- To **respond quickly and quietly** when asked to leave the classroom.
- To take **responsibility for their own behavior**.

WCS strives to maintain a positive learning environment for all students at all times.

Core Beliefs that Guide Enforcement of School Rules and Expectations

Each student is a unique individual with distinct personal, social and educational needs. As a result, every disciplinary situation is unique in nature. Consequences for misbehavior provide the best learning value when matched to the particular student and the specific situation. Students are more likely to learn from their mistakes when they see a reasonable connection between their behavior and the resulting consequences. WCS follows a Student Discipline Matrix” to guide us in giving consequences for more serious behaviors. A copy of the “Willits Charter School Student Discipline Matrix” is attached in the back of this packet.

The Willits Charter School staff dedicates itself to following a set of core beliefs that provide a guide for dealing with student discipline. These core beliefs guide our attempts to individualize disciplinary procedures. Since these core beliefs guide our professional decisions, the staff encourages parents to bring concerns and questions to us in the event that we operate in ways that appear to be inconsistent with these core beliefs.

WCS Core Beliefs

- Every attempt will be made to maintain the dignity of students and adults.
- Misbehavior will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world, as opposed to a personal attack on the school or staff.
- With guidance, students should solve the problems they create without making problems for anyone else.
- Misbehavior should be handled with logical consequences instead of punishment whenever possible.
- Students should have the opportunity to tell their side of the story when consequences appear to be unfair.
- School personnel will handle school problems. Criminal activity will be referred to the proper authorities.

Willits Charter School Rules

All members of the school community must behave responsibly, respectfully, and safely at all times and in all situations.

Responsible, respectful and safe behavior **excludes**:

- Threats, intimidation, bullying, harassment or serious verbal confrontation
- Wearing clothing that promotes violence, alcohol or drugs.
- Intentional harm to the school or others
- Possession or use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco. (Note that confirmed drug use during school hours will result in a police referral)
- Use of offensive language or profanity
- Defacing school property; graffiti.
- Major class disruptions, defiance of authority, willful disregard of school rules, or disrupting school activities
- Theft (includes personal or school property)
- Possession of any weapon on campus, including knives of any length
- Riding bikes, skateboards or rollerblades on school grounds
- Fighting or horseplay (kicking, slapping, pushing or shoving)
- Cutting school, cutting class, or leaving campus without permission
- Sexual Harassment (as defined by California Ed. Code 212.5)

Dispute Resolution

It is expected that school staff, parents, and students work together to address and solve any issues that arise. Please use the following guidelines to resolve any conflicts that may occur.

The first and best means of resolution is direct communication. Always try to solve your conflict with the person(s) most directly involved. If the problem is between a student and a teacher, the student is always encouraged to first speak to the teacher directly. If the problem is between a parent and a school staff member, they should attempt to discuss the matter in a friendly way with the person concerned. The great majority of problems can be solved by honest, respectful communication.

- If there is a conflict between students that direct discussion cannot resolve, the students should seek out a responsible peer, teacher or administrator to help mediate the dispute.
- If the conflict involves a staff member and direct communication cannot resolve it, the concerned party should contact the director to help resolve the conflict.
- If there is a conflict that involves the director, the concerned party should contact the president of the Charter School Association Board of Directors, or any other Board member, for assistance.

In general, if you have tried direct communication and are not satisfied with the results, the next step is to take the matter to the next person up the chain of command. All staff, students, parents and Board members should always attempt to solve disputes internally. Please recognize that Willits Charter School is an independent charter school and is not a part of the Willits Unified School District. Willits Unified will not get involved with internal disputes regarding WCS.

Complaint Process Regarding Discrimination

In the event that a student or family feels that discrimination has occurred, specifically in regard to the food program, a Civil Rights and Complaint Procedures pamphlet can be found in the front office along with our other informational material. As with our dispute process, we would expect that the complainant will report issues to the appropriate people to resolve the complaint.

